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Community Television Review

July 1981
\$3.00

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Municipal Ownership

Co-operative

Municipalities & Cable TV

Special Section

1980 NFLCP Annual Report

4

Calendar

June 26 – July 2 American Library Association 100th Annual Conference, Civic Auditorium and Hilton Hotel, San Francisco.

Contact: Chris Hoy (312) 944-6780.

July 9–12 NFLCP 4th Annual Convention, Atlanta Biltmore Hotel. Contact: Cindy Kuper, Coordinator, NFLCP 1981 Convention, P.O. Box 7013, Atlanta, GA 30357.

July 27–28 "System Preventive Maintenance" seminar, Society of Cable Television Engineers, Dutch Inn, Orlando, Florida. Contact: SCTE, (202) 293-7841.

July 29 – August 2 National Federation of Cable Broadcasters 1981 National Conference, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado. Contact: Nan Rubin, NFCB, 1313 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 797-8911.

August 5–7 "Educational Technology: the State of the Art"

Conference, sponsored by the National Audio-Visual Association, Memphis, Tennessee. Contact: Terri Fawcett, NAVA Materials Council, 3150 Spring St., Fairfax, VA 22031 (703) 273-7200.

August 20–22 Southern Cable Television Show, Georgia World Congress Convention Center, Atlanta. Peachtree Plaza will be headquarters hotel. Contact: (404) 237-8228.

September 1 Deadline for nominations for 1981 Women at Work Broadcast Awards, sponsored by National Commission on Working Women. Contact: Sally Steenland, NCWW, 1211 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

September 9–11 "Cable Television: An Advertising and Marketing Tool," Concourse Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin. Sponsored by the University of Wisconsin Extension.

Contact: Barry Orton (608) 262-3566.

September 12 National Endowment for the Arts, Media Program Deadline for 1981 Film/Video Production. Information and applications from NEA, 2401 E Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20506 (202) 634-6300.

September 23–25 6th Annual Conference for Satellite Communications Users, Public Service Satellite Consortium, Washington Hilton. Contact: Polly Reed Rash, PSSC Director of Communications, Suite 907, 1660 L Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

October 4–6 Cable Program Marketing Exposition, New Orleans Hyatt. Co-sponsored by the National Cable Television Association and the Cable Television Administration and Marketing Society. Contact: Char Beales (202) 457-6752.

November 1–4 NAEB Annual Conference, Hyatt Regency, New Orleans. Contact: Terry Lepovitz (202) 785-1100.

November 8–10 Arts/Cable Exchange, sponsored by University Community Video, Holiday Inn, Minneapolis. Contact: Pat Brenna, UCV, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414 (612) 376-3333.

November 28 – December 2 National League of Cities Annual Congress of Cities, Detroit. Contact: NLC Conference Office (202) 626-3205.

December 2–4 Western Cable Show, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California. Contact: Jerry Yanowitz (415) 881-0211.

A Publication
of the National
Federation of Local
Cable Programmers
**Community
Television
Review**

Volume 4 No. 3

If you know of upcoming conferences, meetings, festivals, screenings or other special events, please tell us about them. Send all information to CTR Calendar, c/o University Community Video, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.



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The Community Television Review is published quarterly at University Community Video by the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. Subscriptions, memberships, and inquiries, send to NFLCP, 3700 Far Hills Ave., Kettering, OH 45429. Letters to the Editor and other editorial material, send to: CTR, c/o University Community Video, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414. Subscriptions come with memberships: Individual \$15/year, Non-Profit Organizations \$50/year, For-Profit Organizations \$100/year and up; or can be obtained separately for \$12/year for individuals, \$20/year for libraries, or \$30/year for organizations. Contents Copyright 1981 by National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, Inc. Non-Profit, tax-exempt organizations may reprint items from CTR (with the exception of materials copyrighted by others), provided they credit CTR and notify us of the reprinting. All others must obtain advance written permission.

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Design & Printing: Bolger Publications, Inc.

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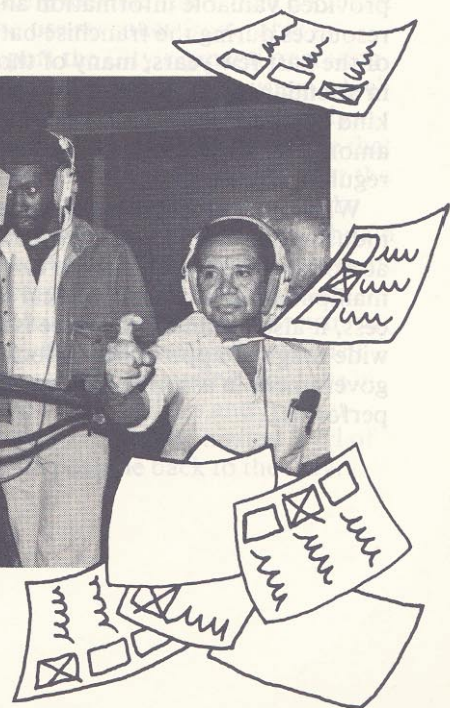
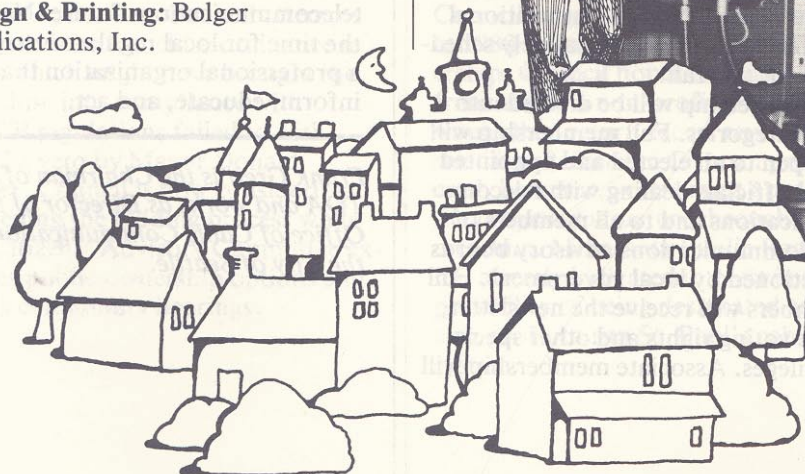
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NFLCP's 1980 Annual Report to Members, special insert section.

And Much More



City Telecommunications Regulators Form National Association

by Frank Greif

There is a new acronym on the cable horizon and it may spell at least partial relief for local administrators and advisors trying to unravel the mysteries of cable television. The acronym is NATOA and it represents the newly formed National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors.

If the name appears a bit awkward suffice it to say that NATOA is the result of a committee. Unlike the proverbial committee camel however, this is not an ill-designed dromedary but a clearly focused organization that will join the ranks of the NFLCP and others dedicated to making cable promises into cable reality.

NATOA was formed at last October's conference on Cable and Cities sponsored by the NFLCP and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. It was the first national gathering of local officials charged with regulating the last mile of cable. For many in attendance the workshop discussions on specific issues were real eye openers. While NFLCP and the Cable Television Information Center have provided valuable information and resources during the franchise battles of the past few years, many of those in attendance felt the need for some kind of direct information sharing among those involved in ongoing regulation.

While it was recognized that the industry has become very proficient at working with, and in some cases manipulating, the local political process, it also became clear there is a wide range of approaches by local government in assuring the industry performs.

Following the last session of the conference almost 50 people met to discuss ways of continuing the dialogue started in Madison. It was determined that a formal organization might be the best method and 15 volunteers agreed to serve on a steering committee to form NATOA. Since that October meeting much has happened including the election of a chairman and a five-member Executive Committee. That group is now in the process of drafting by-laws which will be presented to the membership for ratification. In the interim, the Steering Committee has agreed on a very basic statement of purpose which will guide NATOA. It includes:

- Establishment of a system for sharing information about cable and telecommunications issues and activities that impact local government.
- Provision of education and training for local government officials to enhance the capacity of local government to deal with cable and telecommunications issues.
- Provision of both technical and policy development assistance to the membership.
- Study and clarification of local government needs in the use, development, and regulation of cable and telecommunications systems.

A first step toward achieving the goal will be the publication of a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter. Plans also call for another national conference which is tentatively scheduled for this fall.

Membership will be divided into two categories. Full membership will be open to all elected and appointed local officials dealing with telecommunications and to all members of telecommunications advisory boards sanctioned by local government. Full members will receive the newsletter, have voting rights and other special privileges. Associate membership will

be open to non-industry individuals involved in the planning, development, programming or research of cable. They will receive copies of the newsletter.

It will be no easy task to pull such a national organization together. Therefore, NATOA has agreed to affiliate itself with the National League of Cities which will act as secretariat. NLC has developed a strong position in cable with the formation of a special Cable Task Force and the approval of a Code of Franchise Standards and Practices. With NLC's organizational abilities and strong commitment to telecommunications issues the arrangement should benefit each group.

Anyone interested in receiving information about joining NATOA should contact:

Ms. Susan McAdams
NATOA Liaison
National League of Cities
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

As the miles of cable increase throughout the nation the regulatory role of the local government will go through many changes. We are all aware of the many different approaches to regulation and deregulation in the Congress and the fact that we will soon have a new Federal Communications Commission. How these bodies respond to industry pressure for change and how the local cable regulator responds to the changes will determine much of our telecommunications future. Now is the time for local regulators to join in a professional organization that can inform, educate, and act.

Frank Greif is the Chairman of NATOA and works as Director of the Office of Cable Communications for the City of Seattle.

New Community Service Begins Operation

The Office of Communication of the 1.8-million member United Church of Christ announced the launching of a new service to help community organizations use cable TV and participate in the franchising of cable systems by local governments.

Called Community Telecommunications Services, the new entity is a non-profit consulting service which will provide lawyers, economists, engineers and program specialists to help communities prepare cable franchises and operate public access channels. It will also conduct workshops to teach community leaders about cable TV, according to the Rev. Dr. Everett C. Parker, director of the Office of Communication, who made the announcement. A few of the "tools" in the CTS arsenal are:

- A curriculum for workshops for community and church leaders, written by Sue Buske, executive

director of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. It teaches how to negotiate cable contracts, how to write and enforce franchises, how to assure access of the public to cable, how to program systems and how to ensure fair employment practices.

- A sixth (1981) edition of "A Short Course in Cable," the Office of Communication's own cable handbook, written by Jennifer Stearns, coordinator of CTS.
- Consultants who are prepared to advise local governments and community organizations on cable issues. Heading a group of lawyers is Michael Botein, professor of law and director of the Communications Media Center, New York Law School, who helped the Federal Communications Commission draft its 1972 cable TV rules. Non-legal consultants include Larry S. Glazer, president of Financial Consultants, Inc., and a certified public accountant, Paige Amidon, a specialist in videotext, teletext and cable-text systems; Ben Park, director of the telecommunications program at Empire State College

and an expert on two-way television services, and Alan Pearce, telecommunications economist, formerly with the Federal Communications Commission and the communications subcommittee of the House of Representatives and now Professor of Economics at George Washington University.

Educational Uses of Cable TV Source Book

NFLCP has scheduled this publication for release in Fall '81. We are seeking current information about all aspects of K-12 and higher education uses of cable TV. Please send information about ways your school, college or university uses cable TV. Also interested in special educational cable projects, institutional networking, and educational software for cable TV. Please include name, address, and phone number of contact person. Carol Brown Eilber, 933 Lorain Avenue, Durham, NC 27704/phone: 919-477-2806.

The Continuing Saga of Twin Cities Franchising

by Sallie E. Fischer

While suburban Twin Cities communities seem to be making steady progress in the cable franchising process, Minneapolis and St. Paul have returned to the drawing board following actions which promise a delay in wiring for some time.

The Minneapolis Cable Communications Board (MCCB) denied certification of the franchise awarded to Storer subsidiary Northern Cablevision in April. City Council attempts to amend the franchise ordinance in ways which might have brought the franchise into compliance with MCCB regulations failed to withstand a veto by Mayor Donald Fraser. Council is now considering reopening the bidding process while the Citizens' Advisory Committee explores public ownership options and holds community hearings.

Some aldermen, mindful of the impact of local elections and related lobbying during the original bidding process, feel it might be best to hold off rebid until 1981 City elections have taken place. Cable companies, some of which did not bid on the City's first IFA, are gearing up for a new round of franchising although it's not yet clear whether the city will, in fact, go the traditional route of private ownership.

In St. Paul, meanwhile, City Council rejected seven bids received in 1980 and voted for municipal ownership. Council hopes to award the franchise to a non-profit group which would then return excess revenues to the City. Before the City can proceed, however, voters must approve the proposed structure through a referendum. Minnesota Public Radio has already indicated interest in the possibility of being designated as the non-profit to run St. Paul's cable system.

Criticism of the Council's action has begun to emerge from local citizens who have been participating in the City's franchising process. According to some, the Council's intent — to use revenues from cable to support the City's general operating budget — will lead to a system which will not service community needs in appropriate ways. Critics charge that cable subscribers should not bear the burden of St. Paul's budget problems, a burden which they say should be shared by all taxpayers. Others are concerned about first amendment problems resulting from government ownership and say they're worried that local programming won't be insulated from politics and from attempts to return the highest level of profits possible back to the City.

Regional Reports

Northwest

Last April's Northwest Regional Conference was nothing short of a fantastic success. We increased our regional membership from 20 to over 100 members. A total of 130 people attended the conference with some 30 speakers and panelists participating from around the Northwest. George Stoney came out from NYU. His input and energy added much to the excitement of the weekend meeting.

For many people attending, it was their first opportunity to find out what others are doing in the Northwest in Community Programming. It was also an opportunity for some important networking in both programming and lobbying activities.

Participants had a chance to view Hometown U.S.A. 1980 in addition to attending sessions ranging from *The History of Community Programming in the Northwest* to *Formation of Consortia to Promote Specialized Programming*, to name a few.

During the regional caucus, Marjie Lundell was elected Regional Coordinator. Marjie works for Multnomah County and Cities as their cable officer. Also elected were Area Coordinators who will help disseminate information and provide local leadership for individual communities. They are:

Connie Brand — Portland Area
Mary Ellen Wainwright — Eugene

Area

Paula Thornton — Spokane Area
Mike Cady — Seattle Area

Six delegates to the 1981 National Convention were elected:

Chuck Atkins John Boles
Tom Taylor Bob Flug
Paula Thornton Connie Brand

Adam Haas was re-elected as Northwest Representative to the Board. Serving as interim Regional Coordinator in the past, Haas faithfully submitted regional reports to the CTR and has provided this farewell report. In an exclusive interview of himself, by himself, Haas commented, "It's very gratifying to have worked so hard to pull together the Northwest and having organized a successful conference, feeling that the excitement and momentum generated helps guarantee a vital region. I look forward to remaining involved in regional activities through representing the Northwest Region on the Board." Marjie — you write the next one!

— Adam Haas

Central States

A new style of workshop highlighted the Spring Regional Conference. Jim Bell of Frankfort, KY, led the participants in a session titled, "Information Flow to People Who Need it Most." Jim took suggestions on topics that people needed specific information on immediately. Names, addresses, titles of publications — all flew back and forth across the hall of the Dayton Convention Center even faster than during the cocktail hour that followed. The camera crew from Access Dayton was hard-pressed to follow the action in this session.

The other general session of this conference centered on Copyright. Attorney Howard Liberman, formerly of the FCC Cable Bureau, departed from his written remarks to answer a multitude of questions about music licensing, contracts, li-

Midwest

Over April 25-26, our Regional Conference was held in Evanston, Ill. Over 200 people from around Chicago and the Midwest participated in a variety of panel discussions which involved concerns and interests such as: The franchising process; specialized access uses with cable (Arts, Libraries, Churches, Senior Citizens, Women, Young People, City Governments); Community involvement, organization, production with access; communications alternatives with low power TV and cable cooperatives; Fundraising for access production programming. Special thanks should be given to Margie Nicholson and Claudia Crask for the extra time and energy both spent organizing and coordinating the resources, activities, and overwhelming attendance to make the conference happen.

A Midwest Regional Meeting was also held during the conference. Preparations for the July '81 NFLCP National Convention in Atlanta were made. 11 Delegates (and 11 Alternates) from around Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas were elected to attend. An election for Midwest Regional Coordinator was also held with Lily Ollinger,

Director of the Chicago Editing Center, elected. (We wish to thank Lily for her participation with the NFLCP in this capacity.) Plans for future Midwest Conferences were then discussed with prospective sites in Milwaukee (Fall '81), and Iowa City (Fall '82).

If you have any interest in having other communities view exemplary access produced videotapes from your community on their cable access TV channels as well as you viewing tapes from other communities on your cable access channel, keep on the lookout for the NFLCP's "Hometown USA" Video Festival. Please contact Margie Nicholson, 1124 Moorland Rd., Madison, Wisc. 53713; Phone: 608-222-7317.

Another conference of interest will be happening this Nov. 8-10 in Minneapolis, Minn; "The Arts/Cable Exchange." This conference will explore production programming and administrating arts channels; Funding; Satellite distributing arts/cultural programming. Contact Pat Brenna, University Community Video, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

— Bill Newbern

bel, and the basis of who-owns-what. A full discussion of this session is beyond the scope of this report, but it was plain to all concerned that the NFLCP and its members need to look into this issue very closely.

In the business meeting, the members voted to appropriate funds to be used by the regional Board representative to attend Board meetings. The region will review this action at future meetings to keep it in line with available funds.

The next regional conference will be held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in the fall.

In other activity around the region: Wyoming and Grand Rapids, MI, are working together to create a strong access climate in those two adjacent cities . . . East Lansing, MI, is receiving the equipment for their new "Studio B," and Mindy Snyder continues to crank out the only weekly access newsletter I know of . . . Vid Beldaus in Columbus, IN, is directing a nationwide telephone survey of access users . . . Greg Vawter is working on a medical education project via the South-of-Dayton cable system . . . Fred Johnson of Frankfort, KY, directed a full-day workshop on cable for educators at the Association for Educational Communications and Technology convention in Philadelphia — other CS panelists included Bob Muhlbach and Nancy Dyki (East Lansing), Dave Bloch (Toledo), and Don Smith (Bloomington, IN).

— Dave Bloch

Far West

The Far West held a regional meeting on March 28 and 29 in Fresno, California. The meeting, hosted by Fresno Cable TV, was an organizational, business meeting (no workshops). It brought out the need, with the much increased membership and the franchising/refranchising activities, for definitions, regional procedures and increased cooperation between those working for non-profit, community-based access centers and those working in local origination. Common problems identified in both groups were: actualizing franchise promises of community/public access, adequate staff for productions and promotion, and control of programming content and equipment. Also, the need to be responsive to our growing membership in southern California and Arizona became evident, especially increased community education efforts.

The California Chapter made a formal presentation to the California Public Broadcasting Commission (CPBC) on April 24, 1981. The videotape "Community Video in California," produced by Marin Community Video and partially funded with a grant from the Foundation for Community Service Television, was the basis of the presentation. It was accompanied by oral and written testimony urging the CPBC to do a complete and thor-

ough job of both their evaluation and encouragement functions called for in AB 699. The Bill, signed by Governor Brown in September, 1979, requires cable systems filing for exemption from local rate regulation to provide a minimum number of community service channels. In addition, deregulated systems must contribute 50 cents per subscriber per year to the Foundation for Community Service Television.

The California Chapter also participated in an informal hearing before the California State Assembly Public Utilities and Commerce Committee on AB 699 in May, 1981.

The Chapter continued its participation in the Foundation for Community Service Television debates on how to allocate AB 699 monies and on outside funding policies for the promotion and encouragement of community cable channels on a local and statewide basis.

In follow-up of the California League of Cities' resolution passed in October 1979 concerning cable television, the League, CPBC and the California Cable Television Association have met and are talking about how the League could support local government in overseeing cable franchising. As of this writing there has been only one formal meeting of these parties.

— Constance Carlson

Southwest

The spring 1981 Southwest Regional Meeting was held in Ft. Worth, Texas, May 21-23 on the TCU campus. Outstanding national, local and regional leadership assembled to address the theme of the conference, "After Franchising: Getting Access Started."

The first of the three day event was devoted exclusively to Low Power Television, and was led by Joan Gudgel, from the Washington, D.C. NFLCP Low Power Hotline Staff. She addressed the uses and applications of low power television, and worked with attendees in completing low power applications.

The last two days of the conference tackled the issues involved in successfully beginning access, once franchising has been completed. This is the

situation for many places in the southwest region, as well as other areas of the country. It is an axiom of successful access that all three elements be present: the municipality, the cable operator, and the access user. The conference was structured around this reality, addressing its workshops to each of these parties and their interests, as well as adding some practical "how to" sessions, and showcasing what is currently being done in the area.

The keynote address was given by Mr. Samuel A. Simon, associate editor of ACCESS. His theme was "Telecommunications and the Future of Access."

Cosponsors with the SW NFLCP were the City of Ft. Worth, the North Central Texas Council of Gov-

ernments, and several participating cable companies that are active in the metroplex, along with the United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County.

The Houston Festival joined with the SW Region of NFLCP and S.W.A.M.P. (Southwest Alternative Media Project) in co-sponsoring a one-day "mini-conference" on Saturday, March 28, at the Public Library. The purpose of the event was to pull together the many diverse access interests in Houston that are interested in furthering the arts through the use of cable. The response to this all-day event was excellent, and moved the city a step closer to the full utilization of cable to promote access interests throughout the community.

— Ed Deane

Berks Community TV's Interactive Ability is Integral Part of Reading City Government

by Jerry Richter

The government of the City of Reading, Pennsylvania, has not conducted a Budget Hearing or Community Development Hearing in City Hall since 1977. This statement may make it appear that the elected officials of Reading prefer to conduct their municipal business in secret and that the citizens are comfortably ignorant of the working of their local government. In fact the opposite is the case.

Budget and funding decisions are discussed and arrived at publicly with the potential for involvement by, and input from, all citizens of the city. This is accomplished by conducting the public business of government, not just in City Hall, but, in a very real and literal sense, in all the cabled homes and public buildings of the city simultaneously.

Since the fall of 1977 the City of Reading has availed itself of a unique telecommunications resource called Berks Community Television (BCTV), a non-profit, community-based producer of interactive cable programming to assist in making its public hearings accessible to the whole community.

BCTV began two-way, interactive programming in January, 1976, as the NYU/Reading Consortium, one of three interactive cable experiments funded by the National Science Foundation. The consortium was composed of New York University's Alternate Media Center and Graduate School of Public Administration, the City of Reading, Berks County Senior Citizens Council, the Reading Housing Authority and Berks TV Cable, an American Television and Communications System.



Chief Rodney Steffey, Reading Police (left) and student, Reading High School, discussing the police raid on Reading High on BCTV.

After 14 months of interactive, two-way audio/video programming between three neighborhood centers, with telephone participation from viewers at home, the experiment ended and the non-profit organization, (BCTV), was formed to continue what had become a vital community communications network.

One of the first regular users of this unique system was the city government. A weekly program, "Inside City Hall," began in January, 1976, and has continued to the present without a break. The format of this program is simple. Each week one of the five members of city council, including the Mayor, appears on BCTV with a volunteer host from the League of Women Voters from a Senior Citizen activity center in downtown Reading. Citizens can attend this center or a neighborhood center in another part of the city and communicate directly with the elected official to request services, offer suggestions, criticism, or, not infrequently, praise.

Citizen participants at neighborhood centers have direct face-to-face contact with the council member through the use of a split screen, which allows each party to the interaction to see the other on a television monitor or receiver.

Those who don't wish to go to a center in the evening, or who are homebound, can participate by phone. The homeviewer phones feed directly into the program audio without a delay circuit and permit homeviewers to carry on a back and forth, interactive dialogue with anyone located at a neighborhood center.

This format proved so successful that in October, 1977, City Council, frustrated by the lack of citizen participation at public hearings, requested the use of the interactive system for its annual budget hearing. Interactive origination points (neighborhood centers) were established at City Hall and the four geographic extremes of the city utilizing a branch

library, community college, public housing project community room and a senior citizens' center.

This made it possible for non-cable subscribers, or those wishing visual as well as audio contact with Council, to go to a location near their home. The public response was impressive.

During the 90-minute hearing over 50 citizens gave input regarding the proposed budget either from home by phone or from a neighborhood center. This can be compared to the average of two persons attending public meetings held only in City Hall.

The success of this early experience with the interactive community television system is evidenced by the fact that, since the fall of 1977, all city budget hearings and community development block grant hearings have used this format with one minor change. City Hall's Council Chambers are no longer used for these interactive sessions because of the age of the building's electrical system and the poor acoustics for television audio in the chambers.

Instead, Council either assembles at Horizon Center, a senior citizen activities building, or disperses throughout the interactive network with various council members going to different neighborhood locations.

However, public hearings and weekly dialogues with public officials are not the only municipal uses of BCTV's interactive capabilities. Many city bureaus have found BCTV to be an effective medium for communication with the public. For instance, a recent police raid on the city high school culminating in the arrest of forty students resulted in a great deal of controversy over the action of the police and insecurity about the state of discipline at the school.

Superficial and sensational coverage of the event by the local broadcast television station did little to shed light on the situation and, in fact, seemed to exacerbate tensions between students and police. The raid occurred at 8 a.m. on a Friday morning and was brought up for discussion at 11 a.m. during "Bridging the Generation Gap," a weekly interactive program which links students with senior citizens for informal discussions.

The following Monday evening a two hour, interactive program brought together representatives from the police, school district and high school administration, the student council, and, through cable television, the general public. This permitted an in-depth explanation and discussion of the reasoning behind the police action, the opinions and feelings of the students and school administrators and input, in the form of questions and suggestions, from home viewers.

Interactive cable, in this case, provided not only a forum for the discussion of a serious community problem and an opportunity to confirm or deny rumors which had been generated by the incident, but also resulted in a solution to the underlying problem of neighborhood vandalism and student drug use which had precipitated the raid.

The students suggested to the police, publicly on live television, that the presence of a highly visible mounted police officer in the area of the school would deter many of the problems which everyone admitted existed. The Chief of Police agreed to this proposal and it was quickly implemented.

The feedback from this program was so positive that, as a result, the Reading Police Department requested a regular time slot in BCTV's programming schedule as a means of increasing its dialogue with the public.

The City of Reading Planning Bureau has also made extensive use of community cable television for two specific projects: public education on the landscaping and utilization of row house backyards and a 17-week series on historic preservation. During the latter series Planning Bureau personnel, in addition to providing advice and instruction to the public on preserving and restoring historic architecture, received valuable input from elderly citizens regarding the history of sections of the city, and of specific buildings, which had not otherwise been documented.

The response of both the citizens and elected officials to this kind of interactive telecommunications has been extremely positive. Participation in the public process of local government previously had been largely restricted to "insiders" and those representing vested interests.

The ordinary "person in the street" variety of citizen tended not to attend hearings or call or visit elected officials in their offices to make his or her needs or opinions known.

A common interpretation of this manifested reluctance on the part of the general public to become involved in the governmental process is that it is due to apathy or lack of interest on the part of the citizen. The experience in Reading seems to indicate otherwise, if government is made easily accessible.

It may not be apathy but real physical fatigue that keeps a laborer from leaving home in the evening and travelling perhaps several miles through city traffic to a central hearing location. It may not be apathy but psychological intimidation that keeps a citizen with a high school education or less from placing themselves in the position of addressing a large body of people in a strange setting in order to voice their opinions. The barriers to participation by the homebound, handicapped and elderly are obvious. Participation is easier when one can walk to a nearby neighborhood location in the company of supportive friends and neighbors or participate from the security and anonymity of one's home.

In Reading, opening the governmental process to those people described above by the use of interactive community television has resulted in a perceptible increase in public involvement and participation. During the past five years elected officials in the city have remarked on the increased sophistication of the comments made and questions asked by citizens during these interactive sessions indicating that this process has increased the general public's awareness of city government and knowledge of how it functions.

The best description of the response of public officials to the use of this medium is a quote from Mayor Karen A. Miller. "The city has come to depend on it . . . If we wanted to be irresponsible public officials we could go back to the old way being satisfied with one person showing up for a public hearing."

Jerry Richter is the Executive Director of Berks Community Television.

AccessProfile

Bay Area Community College Creates Cooperative Local Programming Links

by Anna Dabney and Paula Harrington

In an act of cooperation in Oakland, California, a community college district, an instructional program, and a cable system have combined their resources to create a new community cable channel. Peralta Television, Channel S, began its operations on February 11, 1980.

Behind the creation of Channel S are the Peralta Community College District (PCCD), the Laney College Media Communications Department (MEDCO), and Teleprompter of Oakland-Piedmont. The Peralta District is a network of colleges serving the residents of Alameda and Plumas Counties. Its urban campus, Laney College in downtown Oakland, has for some time operated a successful television program.

Since 1972, the department has consistently had enrollments of about 200 multi-ethnic students in both daytime and evening classes. Individuals of varied ages and backgrounds learn production skills through hands-on experience, as well as on-camera expertise in news reporting, interviewing, and entertaining. New students spend one semester in the black and white studio getting a basic orientation to electronic equipment before undertaking projects in the broadcast-quality color studio and in the community.

In 1977, Laney's Media Communications Department received a grant from American Broadcasting Companies, Inc., that enabled the college to purchase a low-energy transmitter. The system connects the TV studios at Laney to Teleprompter via facilities at the Oakland Public Schools.

The new system inspired Laney Media Communications instructor Roger Ferragallo to approach the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees with a plan he had been working on since 1974. His proposal provided for the District, in concert with the Laney Television Program, to operate a cable channel for the purposes of increasing the Peralta Colleges' outreach into the community and increasing public awareness of programs and services each college offers.

Ferragallo's concept — now realized in Channel S — is unique in two ways. First, the symbiotic relationship between the PCCD and MEDCO Department at Laney contribute to a variety of programming possibilities. Original programming for Peralta Television can be produced by Laney College students in the television studios there. This provides the District and Channel S with a trained production crew at the same time that it allows students to gain real work experience.

The other unique aspect of Ferragallo's proposal is that it conceived of the channel being run by a team of five student managers. Such a staff is a natural outgrowth of the instructional program and makes it a financial possibility for the District. Ferragallo would himself serve as General Manager. Richard Turner, named the most outstanding Laney television student, was the unanimous choice for Station Manager.

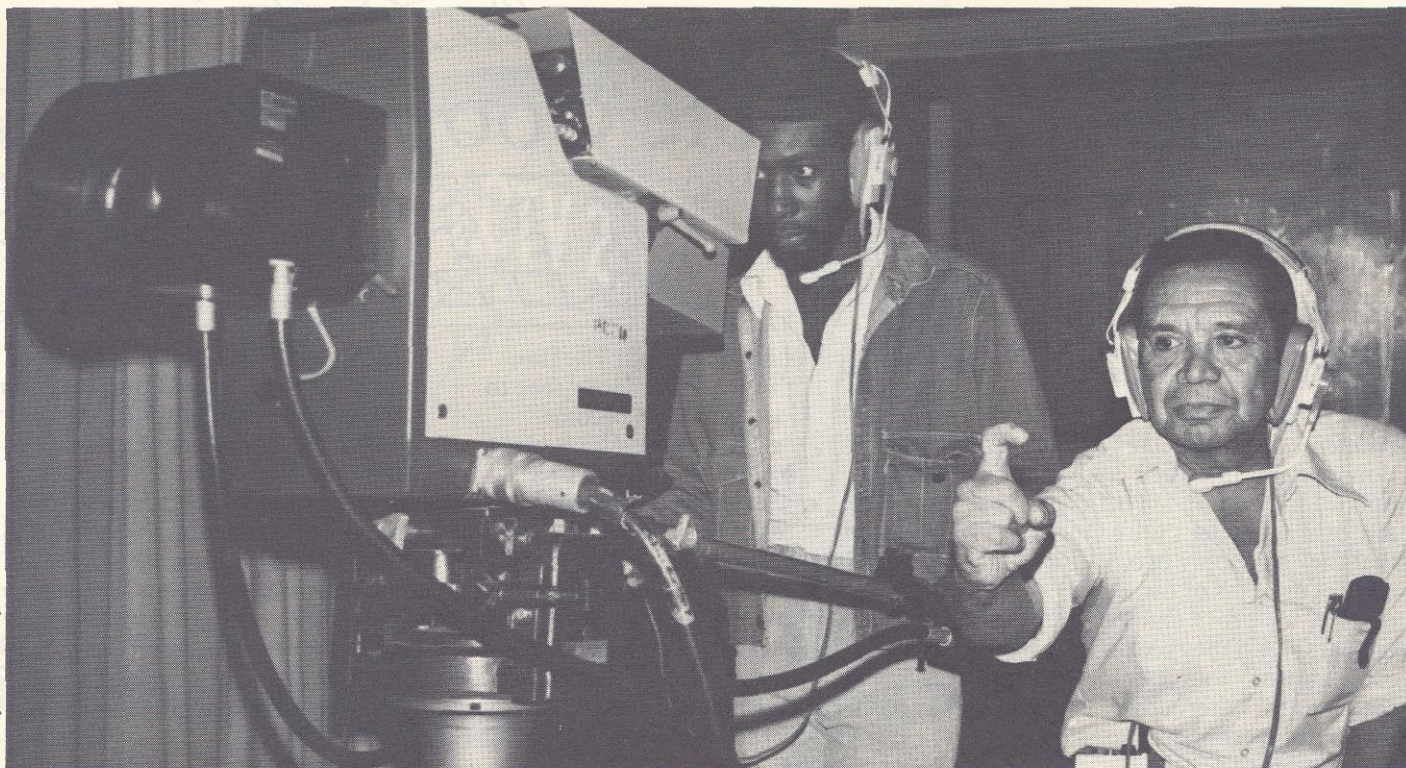
Turner sat on the panel of MEDCO instructors who subsequently selected the other four student managers: Programming Director, Director of News and Community Affairs, Promotion Director, and Technical Supervisor. The staff receives assistance through television department volunteers, work-experience students participating through Cooperative Education and CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) employees. The channel is also supported by a Peralta District Advisory Group (The Peralta Telecommunications Council) and an Industry Advisory Board.

The proposal committed Channel S to four hours of daily broadcasts five days per week for a 48-week broadcast year. In addition, a six-hour daily informational bulletin board (character generated) would publicize community events. Channel S currently provides 42.5 hours of programming and is gearing up for the six hours of daily cablecasts and expanded community billboard promised for the second year of operation.

In his presentation to the Board, Ferragallo emphasized the benefits to Oakland Public Schools from Peralta Television. The transmission link atop Laney College's Theater Building (which houses Channel S) ties in with the OPS TV studios two blocks away. All cable-connected junior and senior highs (a total of about 21,000 students) can receive direct cablecasts of TV documentaries on Peralta College programs, as well as registration and counseling information.

Other special groups benefitting from Channel S are the disabled, the aged, or those with family or job obligations who must study at home.

Photo by Anna Dubney



A variety of telecourses are offered for college credit by three Peralta Colleges sponsoring them. Two 30-minute lessons are covered each week for the four telecourses currently offered. Lessons are cablecast early mornings, early evenings, and are repeated on Saturdays.

Telecourses and community billboard information are presently the backbone of the 42.5 hours of weekly broadcasts. Expanded programming now includes local sports action, interview shows, promos or public service announcements, and a weekly news show. Channel S is rapidly producing new shows to be aired within the next year. In the near future, regular features involving community affairs events, entertainment, news instructional programs, and promotional material will be presented.

Contributing to Channel S programming are the Laney TV Department, the music, drama, and dance departments of the colleges, and the Learning Resource Centers (LRC's) in the libraries of Laney, Vista, Alameda, and Merritt Colleges, and the East Bay Skills Center's Audio Visual Department. Peralta Television also facilitates contacts with the Oakland Museum (adjacent to Laney College), the Oakland Symphony, and the

Oakland Department of Parks and Recreation to promote programming originating from the community. The neighboring Piedmont Public School District will also participate with Channel S in an equipment and videotape exchange.

A wider sharing of information and programming is planned in conjunction with Bay Area cable TV companies and with Bay Area Universities and College Broadcasters (BAUBS), adding another potential 800,000 viewers around the immediate Bay Area. (Teleprompter reaches about 80,000 persons or over 21,000 households.)

Another exciting possibility, approved recently by Peralta District Chancellor Max Tadlock for a feasibility study, is a micro-wave communications system which would link all the Peralta Colleges. A micro-wave link-up would permit inter-college access to conferences, addresses by chancellor or presidents, special classroom demonstrations or lectures, campus community services events, and Channel S programs and community billboard. The micro-wave system would more than double the number of viewers who are currently able to receive Channel S. In the meantime, efforts are now underway to provide cable connections to all the Peralta Colleges' TV studios, LRC's, and outreach centers.

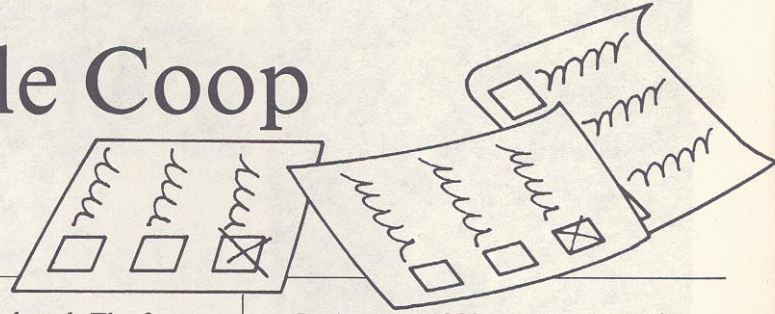
Additional cable links are soon to be accomplished with other community institutions. The City of Oakland and OPS recently received a National Telecommunications Information Assistance Grant of over \$200,000 to extend the scope of the school district's five educational channels, of which Channel S is one. To promote direct involvement with the community, a linkage system will be developed between the Oakland Museum, Oakland Police Department, City Hall, and the Main Branch Library. These institutions would tie in with the community college system, and all would have both upstream and downstream capabilities. This network should be operational before the end of 1980.

Plans for Channel S are ambitious. With costs constantly rising, it is clear that additional funding must be found. The Channel S staff is looking for continuing support from the Industry Advisory Board in the form of grants, donations of equipment, job developing, and assistance in designing curriculum.

The future is wide open for Peralta Television. With the continued effort of dedicated instructors, the valuable counsel of advisory groups, and with enthusiastic and capable student participation, Channel S will continue evolving into a strong positive influence on education and the community.

Ownership Options:

The St. Paul Cable Coop Experience



by Neal Gosman

As pressures mount on local governments to bring cable communications systems into their communities, public interest-minded officials usually operate under the assumption that they have only two realistic choices in terms of ownership — private, for-profit enterprises, or municipal. When they seek advice from cable industry sources, they find that reactions to “alternative” ownership forms range from discouraging to outright hostile.

Discussing municipal ownership, a recent issue of the highly respected Paul Kagan newsletter, “Cable TV Regulation,” opened with the sentence, “Despite mounting evidence that antitrust laws and First Amendment prohibitions are insurmountable obstacles, many cities are exploring alternatives to private sector ownership.” Hardly encouraging.

A paper titled “Municipal Ownership — Political, Philosophical and Practical Considerations,” published by Cable Television Information Center, weighs arguments and points for and against municipal ownership of cable systems. The balance of the varying arguments seems to this writer to tilt against any but regulated, private, for-profit ownership. The piece certainly is no “how-to-do-it” guide for municipal ownership.

The current cable franchising process tends to descend upon local authorities like a summer thunderstorm with a lot of thunder, lightning and high winds. Typically, the storm crashes through in the form of several simultaneously competing, well-funded, locally connected (through “rent-a-citizens”) and high powered cable companies. The wonders of the

technology are displayed. The franchising authorities alternately seek to run and hide, and/or to become instant experts. A consultant is hired (typically for less than 2/100 of a percent of expected revenues) to assist in the selection process. Invitations for bids are let; proposals are evaluated, and one company or another is chosen.

Lately, concerned citizens have agitated on issues of access, special programming and affirmative action. Everyone seeks to grease the squeaky wheel.

But, something fundamental has been missed.

On April 23, 1981, a unanimous decision was reached by the City Council of St. Paul, capital of Minnesota, to construct and operate the city’s cable communications system under “community ownership.”

The city has yet to define in detail the structure of this ownership form, but a number of points are known:

- 1) It is *not* municipal ownership — instead, a non-profit corporation would be established and franchised;
- 2) Control will be local and independent of city hall;
- 3) Profits will stay in the local economy;
- 4) Industrial revenue bonds (not general obligation bonds) are the primary source of capitalization, and
- 5) An experienced, private cable management company or existing cable operator would be hired to do the day-to-day operating.

Every one of these points was first raised by the St. Paul Cable Cooperative in its original bid for the cable franchise last year.

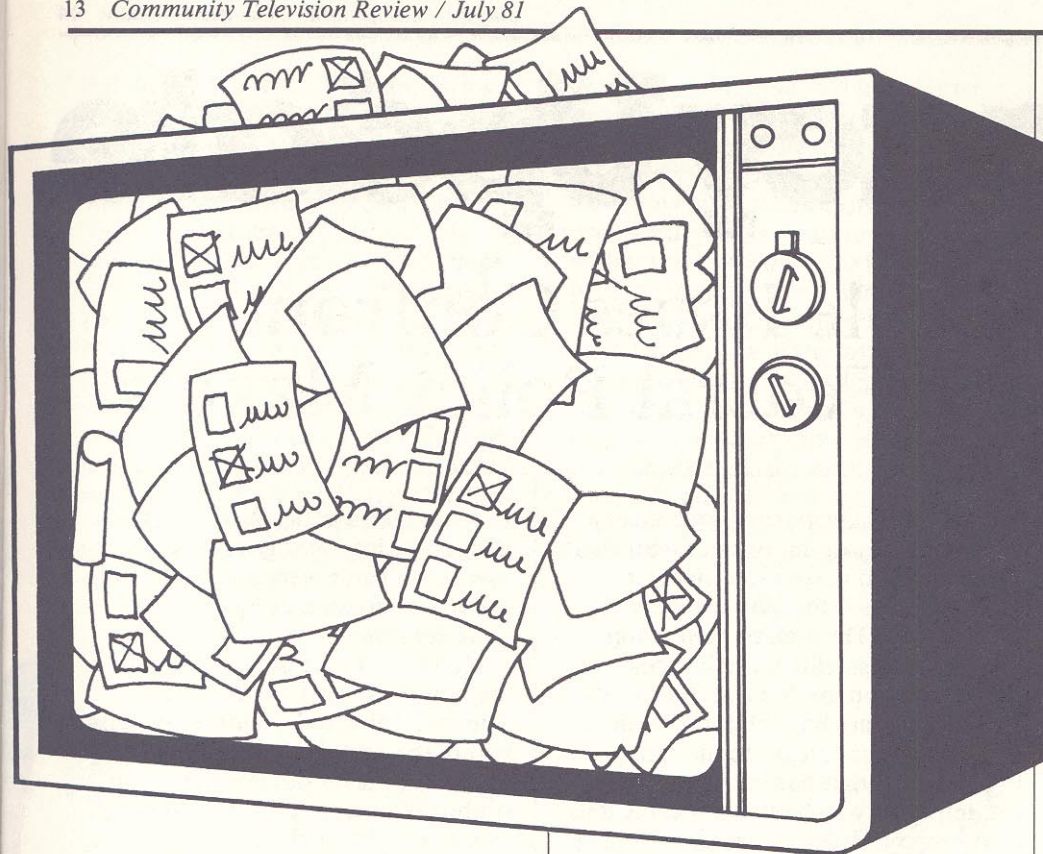
In August, 1980, seven companies responded to St. Paul’s Invitation for Applications (request for proposals) to build and operate the city’s cable communications system. Six of the bids were from major MSOs (Teleprompter, Canadian Cablesystems, ATC together with Heritage, Viacom, Warner-Amex, and Metrovision together with eight local partners). The seventh bid was from the first consumer cooperative ever to bid in competition for a profitable, urban market.

Along with the five points listed above, the cooperative proposed two other points that were unique:

- 1) Each subscriber-member would have one vote (regardless of investment) towards the election of the board of directors of the cable company, and
- 2) All net savings (profits) belonged to the customers who paid the monthly fees, either as refunds or improved service.

These last two elements of business organization are what make cooperatives known as “the third way.”

In the United States, Ben Franklin is credited with establishing the first mutual service business organization when he organized a mutual fire insurance company in Philadelphia in 1752. Beginning in the late 1800s, American farmers began applying the principles of cooperation established a half century earlier in Rochdale, England, to the rural economy. Cooperative grain elevators, creameries, and marketing and supply organizations were established. In this century, farmers organized cooperative telephone systems, oil companies, rural electrification, and credit and lending institutions. In the cities, workers established credit unions and production cooperatives, and consumers formed co-op retail stores, housing, child care services, and



health maintenance organizations.

The principles are basically the same. "Not for profit, not for charity, but for mutual service," is the slogan. Cooperatives are private organizations, typically incorporated, which practice economic democracy. Members pool their resources for the good of all. Each member counts as a person, not according to the amount of money they have. Net savings from operations (profits) are returned to subscribers either as refunds or in improved service. Only as long as members are refunded the profits, does the IRS not tax co-ops.

Unlike government ownership, cooperatives are private enterprises. A cooperative typically is a corporation and empowered under state statute to the rights and privileges of a private organization. The board of directors, often elected annually, sets basic policies and controls the organization. Usually, professional technical management is hired to do day-to-day operations.

Traditionally, cooperatives have worked best in economic situations normally not responsive to free market pressures. Examples are in situations of monopoly and marginal operations. In the past, farmers were forced by the private owners of the only grain elevator in town (often the railroads of the time) to submit to monopolistic prices on a "take it or leave it" basis. So farmers joined together to form their own elevators.

In the 1930s and 40s, private, for-profit utilities didn't care to wire the rural area because it was unprofitable. Rural residents formed cooperatives to bring power and communications to the farm on an "at cost" basis.

Today, the cable communications system presents a new opportunity for consumer cooperation. In fact, the medium is almost perfect for a cooperative enterprise.

A major concern in our democracy today is concentrated corporate control over public communications. The independent newspaper is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Network television represents the very embodi-

ment of corporatism in communications and radio doesn't even try. Unlike Britain, Sweden or Canada, this country has very little tradition of governmental support of public media.

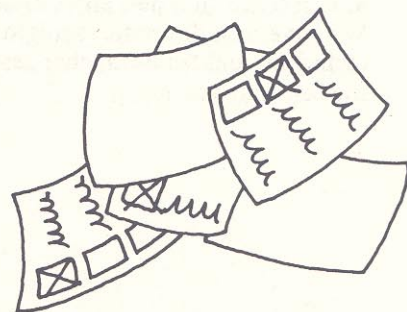
Citizens, acting together for mutual benefit, can democratically own, control, and benefit from cable. The very nature of cable today as an interactive communications medium of tremendous abundance eliminates one of the toughest stumbling blocks in the past history of mass-based cooperatives: member communications.

As cable technology expands modern channel capacity to 50, 100, and more, the space, opportunity, and economics are there to support an incredible array of diversity. A myriad of interests and concerns can be serviced and yet still be tied by its cooperative structure to a unitary body.

Some critics of the cooperative idea like to red-bait the concept, saying that cooperatives are socialism and anti-free enterprise. In fact, cooperatives are the opposite of socialism. The cooperative is the mutual association of many individuals acting freely to work together in a democratic fashion for mutual self-interest. Furthermore, what can be more "anti-free enterprise" than an exclusively franchised, privately-owned and controlled monopoly?

The cooperative concept at first glance can seem confusing — the opposite of both corporate *and* government? But a second look convinces many who examine the idea that *democratic, private control* of the most powerful communications medium available in our society today is the only sensible way to proceed.

Neal Gosman is president of the St. Paul Cable Cooperative.



Advocacy Update

Old and New Cable Issues Confront Local, State and Federal Policy Makers

Following is the text of a speech delivered at the 1981 Conference on the Consumer and Cable TV in Washington, D.C. The views expressed are the personal views of Ms. Rice and do not necessarily reflect policy of the federal agency through which she is employed.

by Jean Rice

What we are going to be addressing today is the new cable that is now being built, the 52 channel capacity cable systems, the cable systems with great consumer choices and consumer services. And, we'll address some problems and potential solutions in the area of local, state and federal regulation.

When we talk about the new cable it is always good to add a bit of reality to the framework in which we talk about a new era, a new ability. Today over 70 percent or more of the systems that are in existence have only 12 to 35 channel capacity. As we discuss some of the issues surrounding new cable and expanded technologies we will find some similarities in the issues that will be precipitated. As we look at the new cable we will look at it in terms of a new environment. We have seen dramatic regulatory, technical, and financial changes in the last four years.

In the financial area, I would say the single most important factor that has come to make cable viable in urban areas is the advent of pay television. Through pay television and use of satellites as a low cost transmission mechanism, the industry's revenues have almost doubled. What this has meant to the cable industry is that banks and insurance companies which once saw cable television as a shaky investment now see it as a very good business investment. That is bringing more capital to bear on the construction and expansion of services.

In the technological area, we see obviously added capacity with 400 MHz systems. We are seeing low-cost earth terminals which are going to make it possible, in the future, not to just capture the programming capability from one satellite, but from many. We are seeing interactive technology and marriage between computers and cable television. And we have also seen an amazing revolution in the kinds of production gear that you have seen on the local level in community access.

Today, the promise of those systems: the text, the shopping and banking services, energy management, fire and burglar alarms, and the computer interface abilities, were all things that many people expected in the early 70's. We looked at it then, and in the mid 70's considered it blue sky. Today, once again we see it not elusive but within our grasps.

In 1972 and through the 70's we discussed what does the new cable mean in terms of ownership issues. Should it be a common carrier, should it be broadcaster, should it be newspaper? At that time it was more

of a long-term issue. We were still dealing with primarily 12-channel systems. People were not bidding in the major urban areas with large capacity systems.

However, in the 80's, those issues are now very short term concerns. They are going to have ramifications within the next five years. And I think that makes our consideration of the policy decisions and issues at every jurisdictional level, local, state and federal, much more important.

Since I worked on the local and state regulatory levels and now in the federal policy level, I have seen major problems develop and I would like to analyze those in terms of how they are going to affect future consumer choice and consumer services.

What I would like to do is take the problems I see on the local and state levels, discuss those along with potential solutions and then to discuss possible areas where I see there may be some need for federal interest. In the area of local and state jurisdictional questions, we will discuss them in terms of franchising, ownership, technical design, and consumer protection.

Franchising

In the area of the franchising process I think it was brought out in the earlier discussion that problems have developed with local jurisdictions that are not fully knowledgeable in the area of cable television. That is not a problem in urban areas that are hiring consultants, but as you siphon down to the suburban markets you

will find a problem. They are facing many of the same problems that cable systems who franchised 15 to 20 years ago faced and that the cities who regulate them are now facing in terms of adherence to agreements and gray areas of franchise language.

A solution, of course, is for local governments to seek out more information on their own. Since the late 60's we can look to a few state governments who provide some technical assistance. I think the two most notable states in this regard are Minnesota and New York State. Overall, however, I think we can say that there is a great lack of information on the local and state level.

I think what is needed in order to provide franchising information is an in-depth national clearinghouse for information that may be provided by local government associations or nonprofit groups or other agencies within the government to help them provide the kind of consumer protection regulations that have become visibly necessary in the last 12 years.

On the state level we are seeing a few states that are franchising only from a state perspective, meaning that the states control franchising. They control the bidding process. There is probably one exception to what I have to say in this area. But

what we find in the actual systems that come out of franchises done in this fashion, is that the local input is decidedly lagging and it is reflected in the technical design, and especially in the community communications component.

We are not seeing institutional loops that reflect the real needs of the community, we are not seeing access that reflects needs of the community, we are not even necessarily seeing technical systems that in effect show the needs of the business or the industrial community.

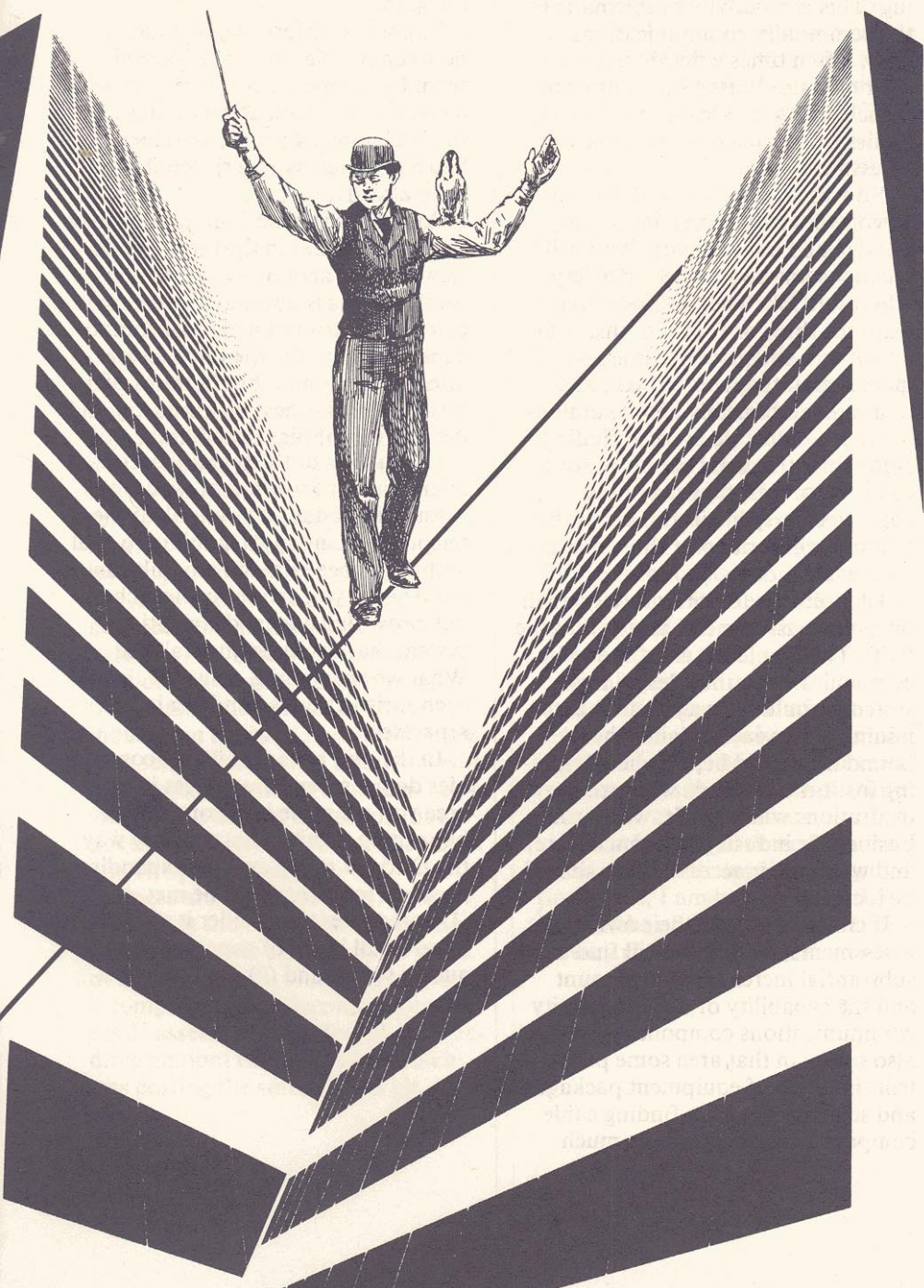
Obviously, the easy way to remedy that problem is to institute a solution that includes various types of local input. So in terms of the franchising and franchising process, I think that what we are talking about is the basic need for more information.

Ownership

In terms of ownership structures, on the local and state level I think we see a decided lack of information on alternative structures for ownership. We see no models in the urban markets. There are a few for traditional private ownership like Los Angeles and New York. But we have none in large areas from municipal ownership for cooperative ownership, for economic development corporations, for joint ventures that might give innovative half and half structures to municipal and private ownership.

I think the reason we have no models is that we have not done the kinds of comprehensive research needed to find out if cities have the bonding power either through revenue or municipal bonds or whether the cooperative structures have the sophistication necessary to take on this type of large entrepreneurial enterprise.

In order to find a solution to cities being unable to find alternative ownership solutions there should be a large scale study to look at those problems. One way that cities could approach it would be for them to go together to fund an analysis. Another, hopefully, would be to find outside sources who would provide funding for that type of study.



We do have, all over the country, cities saying that they will look at ownership options. However, one cannot expect citizens' groups in 60 days, who have to educate themselves first about what cable is, to have an idea of what kind of financial and technical structure it is they need to be thinking about for cable television.

The commonplace, of course, is private ownership. In that area I think we are seeing many problems, and we are seeing problems I think the consumer will eventually pay for and pay for quite substantially. I think the major problem we are having is in terms of local ownership. We have rent a citizen, rent an institution, give a freebie. Rent a citizen: one major company in an urban market gave away 20 percent of its ownership to 7 partners who paid only 200 dollars apiece. For rent an institution we see several places where one institution is picked as substantially and politically involved in the community to help with the franchising process. Give a freebie: we have seen places where cable companies have given a library and in an area near here a company is going to give money for city park lights.

Obviously, it is a point at which the cable systems operators see great revenues coming in the later years, and they see that the best way to generate a franchise award is through this kind of giveaway. I am afraid that it is much more prevalent than we would like to think. I do not see companies self-regulating in this area. And I think that it is an area that local governments will definitely have to undertake.

One of the ways that they can do this, is if they (1) encourage local ownership which keeps revenues within the community by requiring complete financial disclosure, even in terms of local partnership and the percents paid for it, (2) encourage in RFP's that this practice not be done and that any evaluative structure would not encourage it. It can also be done through the help of exparte rules for citizens' committees and city councils.

Another major problem that we are seeing in ownership is lack of minority ownership. We all thought five years ago that this would be the last chance for minorities to have some large share investment in the media. We are not seeing it on a broad scale. We may be seeing a percent in the community that has a fifty percent minority population. But this is a major problem that too can be solved on the local level through more sophisticated use of the RFP and evaluation process.

Technical Design

Aside from franchising process and ownership problems we have technical design problems that are emerging. This is especially problematic in the community communications area. Often times cities do not do their own needs assessment prior to franchising which leaves cable companies to provide their own needs assessment.

Now as we all know and for those of you who have read a lot of proposals like I have recently, you will see that some companies do a very admirable job. They will send in a team for three or four months, come up with an adequate needs assessment that anticipates growth, and that talks responsibly about community needs. But, we are also finding companies that send people in for a day or two. Yes, they may have contacted forty institutions, but they talk to them for two or three minutes on the telephone.

The solution for cities is to do their own needs assessment, attach it to the RFP. Then, at least, all of the cable companies when they design their systems would have a basis for determining where each neighborhood boundary should be, or when designing institutional loops where the new institutions will be built, where the business or industry investments are, and where their access centers should be located.

If cities undertake their own needs assessments, I think we will find a substantial increase in the amount and the capability of the community communications component. We are also seeing in that area some problems in terms of equipment packages and structure. We are finding cable companies bidding way too much

hardware and not enough personnel to maintain it. We are seeing over-bidding in some cases which we know cannot be followed up as actuality. We are seeing structures that are not conducive and do not take into consideration the ten years of experience we have had in access.

I think the solution is two-fold in that area. I think cities can start, as many are now, by working on the structure and setting up non-profit groups to run and operate access. I think cable companies on their side should hire personnel experienced in this area and we have seen this emerging quite a bit in the last year where companies are hiring people who have an actual background in the area.

There is a difference, of course, between people who have learned from hard experience and people who have not, and I am afraid in this case, the bids done by people who have had actual access experience shows dramatically.

Another area that I am particularly concerned about in the technical design is in the area of local interconnection. This is not only for the community communications component, which we see the most local interconnection in, but in terms of services for business and industry and the transfer of high speed data.

If you look at the scarcity in the microwave spectrum that we have in most cities today, if you look at the telephone company's inability to deal with high speed data in any substantial degree, you can see cable technology providing a local distribution system that could be unparalleled. What we are finding, however, is that each jurisdiction is handling it separately.

In the rare instances where companies do get several franchises in an area you see some interconnection happening. I think that the only way the needs of today and the expanding needs of tomorrow will be met, is for (1) companies to consider it a crucial issue on all levels of capacity, data, audio, video, and (2) for states to

look at it. It is definitely an internal state matter and it is something that states need to take into consideration.

New Jersey, of course, is in the forefront on the community communications aspect. They are in the process of building a statewide interconnect. Minnesota has taken the initiative in the Minneapolis area to mandate an interconnection. Nonetheless, if the technical design problems that are emerging in the major cities in terms of community communications and local interconnection are not solved in these ways, I think we will have problems that will be too costly to overcome.

Consumer Protection

The final area that I would like to discuss in terms of local and state involvement is consumer protection. I think that if you look at the ordinances for existing systems and if you look at the ordinances that are being proposed in the major cities, we are still not seeing adequate consumer protection. I think the only way that it will be solved is if cities and states take a second look at this area.

In terms of the overall need for state and local involvement in regulatory areas I think we are looking at a time when at the local level we need more sophistication, more knowledge and more assistance. On the state level we are looking at more concerns, not necessarily in just the cable area. In 1974 there was basically a leveling off of states that went into the cable regulatory area. I think the new potential in the state area is agencies that deal with planning and regulation for all telecommunications. It is time to look at the cable industry in terms of how it interfaces with telephone, how it interfaces with low power television, broadcast television, and others, not to mention government services like civil defense and fire protection.

There are bills in several states looking at the whole telecommunications area either through the PUC's or other agencies. North Carolina did a comprehensive telecommunications needs assessment and found an incredible amount of duplication which was costing the state quite a bit. They

decided that what they needed was a state telecommunications planning agency, established it, and they are now undertaking planning and coordination functions.

The Federal Role

Now I would like to say that all of the problems that I foresee coming on the horizon with the new cable can be met on the local and state level, but I am afraid I cannot. I do see some problems that may need some federal input and I would like to describe these for you. I am going to be discussing privacy, leased access, emerging ownership patterns, interstate interconnection, and service to regional areas. One of the problems with many of us who work on the federal level is that we have what we see as perceived problems and we do not always know if those perceived problems are actual problems. To resolve this I decided to do a survey of the top 21 urban markets that have franchised in the last year and a half. As I go through each of these problems I will discuss what type of regulation is in place on the local level to deal with each of these issues.

Privacy

Questions asked are: What information will be solicited and retrieved; how will it be used; who will be able to access it; maintain it; destroy it; and what are the confidentiality ramifications. Who will be able to utilize the collected information and will different concerns and privacy issues emerge within the new cable? What are the problems with the use of the information in the aggregate?

All of these are questions that would take a great deal of time to discuss. There are privacy laws existing on the books but there are many privacy issues that need regulations tailored to cable television.

When I surveyed those 21 cities in terms of what their privacy regulations were, I am happy to say that four-fifths of them had some type of privacy regulation. Almost all of

those had a franchise clause which called for individual knowledge and consent for the positioning of interactive services within their community, within their home. I think that is only a very limited component of privacy protection. Only six of those surveyed had any controls on how information is collected, is to be used or disseminated.

I did ask all of those surveyed how many cable companies in the franchising process, not just those who had bid for and won the franchise, had proposed their own safeguards. I am sorry to say there were only two.

On the state level New York State probably has the best privacy protection regulations and that also deals with individual control of interactive services. I think what we are seeing is a pattern where, although there is concern on the state and the local level, we are not seeing adequate protections for the consumer, for you and I in our homes. That is going to necessitate a solution that involves federal regulation.

I think, however, when we deal with federal regulation we are not talking about privacy legislation that only deals with cable television, but one that deals with cable television in terms of how it interrelates with other technologies.

Channel Access

Aside from privacy I think probably one of the major issues that we are facing today is the issue of access to channels on cable systems. Today companies are bidding 104 channels in urban areas. We are talking about a situation where it is potentially possible, as structures and jurisdictions lie now, for one company to have total control of those 104 channels.

We have some interactive cable around the country and I know of three cases (these are anecdotal and should not be considered a universe) where banks or other industries who would like to use the cable system were denied access to it. Even on the old systems with 36 channels, there are several cases where people have been unable to get access to channels at equitable rates.

We have many questions in this area. In terms of the availability and cost one must ask if the rate structure should be determined by the cable company, the city, or state public utility commissions. What are the barriers to competition both in terms of diversity of program sources and in terms of diversity for information providers?

Availability of leased access channels, of course, has been a question and I asked the 21 cities how many had capacity for and put in regulations guaranteeing leased channels. Eighteen of them had. Only 11 of the 18, though, specified the number of channels that should be made available on a lease basis to other entities. The average on the 52 channel system was two. I would say that two channels is insufficient. Insufficient for the demand and the need.

I think there are various solutions. Obviously, cities can become more involved in that area. I think cable companies and state governments can also become more involved in that area. But I am not sure that non-Federal options are going to provide sufficient opportunity for additional access for diversity of programming sources.

Possible solutions to that are old and well documented. Since 1972 there have been suggestions of separations which would basically make cable a common carrier. The largest argument against that is that if the utility or pipeline has no availability to generate revenues through programming it may not be cost-effective. If that is the case, then maybe we need to be looking at a percent of capacity that is available for leased use. This, of course, brings up unresolved 1st and 5th amendment issues.

Ownership Patterns

We have some emerging ownership patterns which I think we need to take a very serious look at. We are seeing cross-ownership, we are seeing concentration of ownership, and we are seeing vertical ownership patterns. Probably the only one that many of you are not familiar with is vertical ownership patterns.

What we are seeing developing today in the cable industry is, in a very simple form, an era where one company can control the produced material and the means of distribution. In this case, transmission over the satellite and the final mile cable. Many cable systems are reluctant to allow other groups to utilize their transmission system or their production equipment or their final mile if they have a competing service.

When you look at ownership in that way you have to take a concise look at it, in terms of concentration and in terms of co-located media ownership at the local level. When I took the survey I am sorry to say that only four cities give consideration to this area. And those were really cases dealing primarily with newspaper cross ownership. This is an area that we can spend hours and hours discussing.

At this point I do not see adequate solutions other than antitrust litigation in the future. I think it bears watching but I see no Federal involvement immediately other than those that are now being investigated either at the Justice Department or at the FCC.

Interstate Interconnection

If our local distribution systems are well handled on the local and state level we will then have a system with incredible capacity, one that may even be able to compete with the telephone company in the future. I think it is an appropriate Federal role to look at interconnection between state lines, and who has control over that interconnection.

Rural Service

The final area I would like to briefly mention, is service for rural areas. I think that is one area where both local, state, and federal jurisdictions have a great deal to say. I know that many counties are planning a county-wide system so that they can aggregate subscribers who will then

make it possible for cable companies to extend delivery to areas that are more remote because they have a larger subscriber base.

There are now proceedings at the FCC to look at telephone company involvement. Two of the major questions there are the definition of rural and whether telephone companies can provide the kinds of services that we need.

This has been just a brief synopsis of the major issues on the Federal level that I see. We have discussed the new environment we see in regulation on the local, state, and federal level. I think we still face the same problems that we were talking about in 1972. We are still seeking solutions, but we need to act quickly.

Information Poor vs. Rich

There was one problem, though, that I have found and have talked about with many people that I do not see quite how on local, state, and federal levels we are going to deal with. That is the problem of a great deal of information being available to the home and the inability for low income people to participate and utilize that information.

I am afraid we may end up in 10, 15, 20 years with an information-poor society. I think often times the poor in the society are those who need information the most for economic development and who need it for educational advancement. I am not sure that our society can afford, as a Democracy, to have informational "have" and "have-nots."

It is something that I would like you to think about within the framework of the other regulatory issues we discussed. The most that I can hope for is that we will end up with a regulatory environment that both promotes the extension of cable, the innovation of programming and consumer services, and that it will provide adequate safeguards for our consumers.

Jean Rice is a Program Officer for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Public Telecommunications Facilities Program

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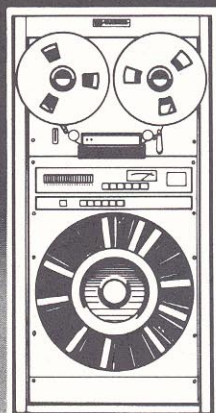
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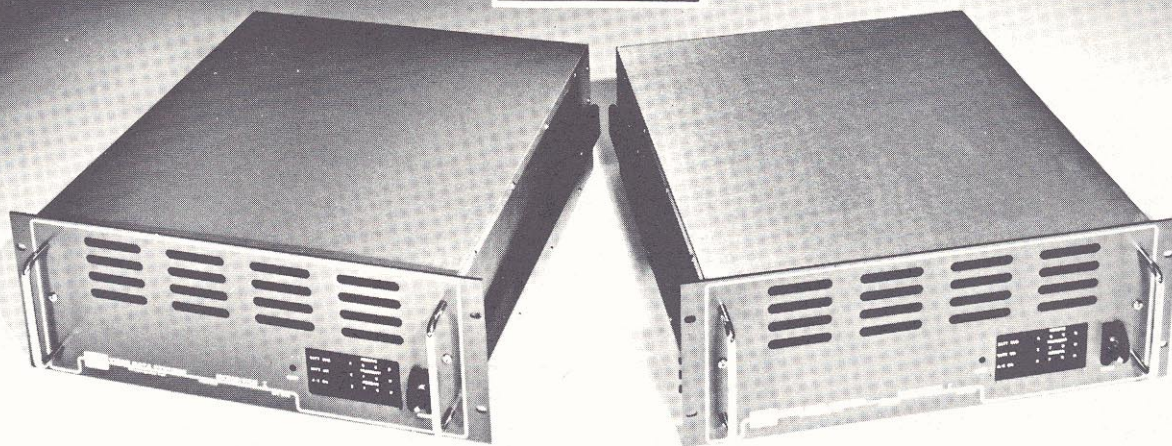
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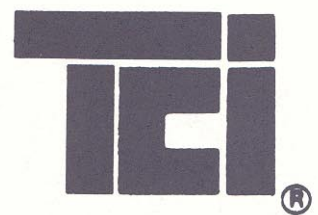


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Boston — The Development of a Public Access Plan

by Robert G. H. McCausland

When last we looked in on our friends in the Boston franchise (CTR May, 1980) Mayor Kevin H. White had been sitting for seven months on the report of his blue-ribbon Cable Television Review Commission, chaired by ACT President Peggy Charren. Now as we join the Beantown show once again, we find the City with a cable office established, an RFP released, and two (Warner/Amex and Cablevision Systems) amended applications filed. Chances are that by the time you read this the Mayor will have decided which will win.

Action on the City's part began in July, 1980, with the hiring of Rick Borten as Cable Television Coordinator. Borten was the head of the Boston Consumer Council who in 1973 recommended to Mayor White that franchising Boston be delayed until the technology proved viable. On August 13, 1980, the City began an 18-month time clock by issuing a request for initial applications — to be filed by November 3, 1980.

The Mayor continued, however, to ignore the Charren Review Commission recommendations for 1) an effective public education campaign, 2) a needs assessment of Boston's individuals and institutions, and 3) a permanent citizen's advisory board, all of which were urged as necessary for community involvement in the franchise planning stage.

The Access Coalition

The Boston Cable Television Access Coalition had formed in June of 1979 (one month after the Review Commission was established) to work for broad-based public involvement in the Boston franchising process. The Coalition successfully influenced the report of the Review Commission, examples of which are the three above-cited recommendations.

In response to the initiation of the franchising process, Coalition board members Dan Jones and Martin Kes-

sel published an Op-Ed piece in the *Boston Globe* (8/20/80) which called for the establishment of a permanent citizen's advisory board as recommended by the Review Commission. Things have not slowed down since. Producers for **The McNeill/Lehrer Report** taped interviews with Rick Borten, Dan Jones, and Martin Kessel for use in the prologue of a show dealing with cable (aired 9/30/80). Rick Borten's office hired Jones as a staff consultant/assistant. The Coalition began a series of monthly meetings with guest speakers from each of the interested companies (the only public meetings, it turns out, in which all of the applicants of record participated).

Next Mayor White appointed the Boston Cable Access Advisory Committee, chaired by Elizabeth Cook of the Boston School Department. The Committee was given two months to work on the issues of structure, governance, and financing for all types of access needs. The Coalition protested that such complex questions of a public interest required more thoughtful study.

This assessment was shared by many members of the Advisory Committee themselves; nevertheless, an important recommendation was to come from their work. This is the suggestion that all access needs be provided for by a nonprofit corporation, separate from both the City and the cable operator. The Coalition had been making such a suggestion with respect to public access; now, however, municipal, educational, busi-

ness/data uses, and institutional uses would all be administered by this corporation (named at this time the Boston Access and Information Corporation).

Various governance structures were discussed — all of them involved the Mayoral appointment of the Corporation's Directors. "One persistent theme" the *Boston Globe* reported of the Access Committee's one public hearing (11/13/80), "was the desire to insulate access from potential influence and to permit access, instead, on an equitable basis."

The Committee's eventual recommendation was for initial Mayoral appointment of 50 Incorporators, and from there, appointment of a board of 15. Eventually, Incorporators would be elected from the community through three councils — Institutional, Business/Data, and Public Access.

The Applicants

Meanwhile, the first round of applications had borne fruit. Nine fruits, to be exact. There were two local companies — Abetta Corporation, owned by Stephen Mindisch, publisher of the Boston weekly newspaper *The Phoenix*; and Boston Cablevision Systems, Inc., owned by Clarence E. Dilday, James S. Dilday, and others. There was the New York Times, and six MSOs — American Cablevision of Boston (American Television and Communications Corporation); Cablevision Systems Boston Corporation (Charles F. Dolan); Rollins Cablevision of Boston, Inc.; Times-Mirror Cable Television of



Boston, Inc.; Tribune Cable of Boston; and Warner/Amex Cable Communications Company.

The Cable Access Advisory Committee delivered its report to the Mayor on December 18. In addition to a nonprofit access and information corporation, the Committee recommended:

- A Mayoral appointed Working Committee to 1) formulate by-laws for such a corporation, 2) conduct a public education campaign, and 3) conduct a needs and resource assessment — these last two to be performed before the filing of amended applications;
- A percentage of the operator's gross annual revenues (5% suggested) plus an initial lump sum for start-up, for the Corporation; and
- 20% of the channels on the subscriber network, and 50% of the channels on the institutional network, to be controlled by the Corporation.

The Coalition responded to the Committee's report with praise and a bevy of questions — about the working relationships, authorities, and responsibilities of the three proposed councils. The Coalition also questioned the implementation and the time-line. It was not the turn of the year, and it was widely known that the RFP was in development. Would the Mayor now continue this neglect for a public education campaign and a needs and resource assessment, both necessary for the development of an RFP with adequately detailed minimum specifications? The Coalition urged public hearings at the very least on the RFP. In a December 30, editorial, the *Boston Globe* stressed this very point, echoing the dominant theme of the Coalition.

"As things stand now, those who have the greatest interest in public access to the system are ill-prepared to say what they want. Therefore, the first priority of the City ought to be to secure funding and launch a substantial effort at public education. And that effort ought to be completed and time allowed for recommendations to the Mayor before the final prospectus for the cable franchise is issued.

"The Cable Access Advisory Committee has high-lighted the importance of the access question to the full success of Boston's cable operation; it has validated the idea that a wide and representative body of city residents ought to control public access aspects of the system once it is developed. It would seem self-defeating if the system is designed, its potential established, without a comparable public process."

The RFP

There was no move from the City to implement the Committee's recommendations. The Cable Office was in quiet labor, and nothing came out until February 7 — behold! The Mayor's Issuing Authority Report (RFP to you). Amended applications were to be filed by April 23 — 75 days. Over 200 pages, the RFP incorporated the Committee's recommendation for a nonprofit corporation (now to be called the Access and Programming Corporation).

The RFP called for a minimum endowment of \$250,000 per year for the first two years for the Corporation, plus 5% of gross annual revenues — a figure about which it is reported there was much moaning, wailing, and gnashing of teeth among the applicants.

White addressed this in his RFP news conference. "In Dallas they gave 20% away to local entrepreneurs. They don't have to buy off anybody in this town; nobody in this town is going to be instant millionaires. But if they can't provide 5% for the local access people — I consider that a minimum and I think it's a requirement that's fair."

The RFP also required a subscriber network of 80 channels minimum and an institutional network of 40 channels minimum, 20% and 25% respectively to be reserved for the Corporation.

The Coalition again responded with praise and concern: Who structures the Corporation and how? Who designs the access system? Who designs the institutional loop? Who owns the equipment and facilities? What are the exact responsibilities of the Corporation?

Before they funnel 5% of their annual gross revenues to the Corporation, some companies commented, they would like assurances that the Corporation will be able to succeed in its goals.

On March 4 the Coalition received a response from the Mayor's Cable Office. "Any ambiguity in the RFP . . . should work to the public's advantage . . . by testing the creativity and commitment of the applicants," Borten said.

"Obviously, the access network designs proposed by the companies will be evaluated as an integral part of the amended applications, and will hopefully provide the City with a sense of the applicants' understanding and commitment to Boston's needs. Refinements in design can be negotiated between the licensee and the Corporation and finalized in a contractual agreement."

This last point remains an open question, since after the RFP is issued, any additional features offered must be offered "of free will."

The Coalition's Plan

In a last minute attempt to influence the amended applications, the Coalition submitted a draft public access system design proposal (*Boston Community Television*) to the applicants on April 14. In the draft plan's cover letter Coalition Co-Chair Dawson Johnson said, "We had not presumed before to propose an access system design, believing that meaningful community discussions would be allowed to suggest that design. This clearly will not happen now, and the Coalition is concerned that there presently exists no comprehensive public access design specifications to guide the applicants in preparing their amended applications."

In the Coalition's plan, public access is redefined as community television. The emphasis is on designing a system which will affirmatively foster community-generated programming, rather than a system in which public access is merely available.

The public access (community television) system would be administered by an independent nonprofit corporation, the Boston Community Television Corporation (BCTC). BCTC would maintain a central support facility and 14 neighborhood production centers, each with its own local council, the chairs of which form the majority of the BCTC's board.

The BCTC would be on an equal footing with any other parties in forming the Access and Programming Corporation, and control would be from the bottom up rather than from the top down. The BCTC would program the public access channels, intermixing sources. The BCTC would not produce programs; rather, programs would be produced by interested members of the community.

The BCTC's prime purpose is to create that interest and provide for its fulfillment. The BCTC would set and maintain system-wide technical specifications, training and administrative procedures. The home convertor should have an expanded FM tuner, a decoding micro-chip for closed captioning, and an optional plug-in for home computers.

The Proposals

When the smoke cleared on April 23, there were only two applicants remaining — Warner/Amex and Cablevision Systems. The Coalition has prepared an initial analysis of the two applications. While both companies submitted basically strong applications, their commitments to public access and to the proposed access corporation was disappointing. But both companies compensated with remarkably strong proposals for local origination (LO).

Warner is promising the greater outlay for public access. It proposes to build seven community studios at a cost of \$1,870,000. Cablevision is proposing a main access studio and three neighborhood studios at a cost of \$1,460,000.

Both companies' LO proposals are impressive. Warner proposes a \$3.5 million Center for Interactive Programming — intended for both local programming and also as a cornerstone of a national video production center, as desired by Mayor White. Cablevision is proposing a more modest studio (\$1,102,000) but it is promising a larger staff than Warner (54 vs. 32 by year five) and more hours local programming per week (80 vs. 21 by year five). Both are planning an annual budget for LO of about \$1 million — nearly as much as their expected contribution to the

access corporation (based upon their projected fifth year revenues for the system of \$20 to \$30 million). This apparent equity between LO and the access corporation evaporates when one considers the substantially more diverse demands that the corporation is charged with meeting.

Cablevision's proposal offers 52 channels for \$2 a month. Warner is charging \$5.95 for 36 channels, though a free 11-channel "Elders Service" is also available with a \$24.95 installation charge, plus service call charges. (However, subscriber rates were de-regulated by the State Cable Commission last year.) Cablevision now proposes two institutional cables: a Commercial Institutional Network for business users and a Public Institutional Network for non-commercial and public organizations — the latter to be revenue generating for, and controlled entirely by the Corporation. Cablevision thus goes far beyond the RFP's — and Warner's — proposal for a single institutional loop with 25% of the channels controlled by the Corporation.

Both companies are willing to pay 5% of annual revenues to the Corporation — with qualifications. Warner proposes that the total fee to the Corporation and the City not exceed 6% (the RFP had, in addition to the 5% for support of the Corporation, required 3% of annual revenues as a franchise fee). Cablevision proposes to pay 5% up to year five, and then to reduce this by a percentage point a year on the assumption that revenues to the Corporation from operation of the 50-channel Public Institutional Network will be substantial.

The Award

The City has scheduled two public hearings at the Public Library for June 23 and 25. The provisional license is expected to be awarded sometime in July, and the Access and Programming Corporation is likely to be formed by that time, so that contractual negotiations with the winning company can begin at once.

For the success of public access (as well as all other types) more important than which company wins is how the Access and Programming Corporation finally forms. Throughout April and May there have been the beginnings of unofficially City-sanctioned group meetings within the educational, cultural, medical, and other sectors. The Coalition has been present at these beginnings, and is assuming the responsibility for seeing that the public access sector of the Access and Programming Corporation will be independently incorporated by the community. To this end the Coalition is currently seeking to involve the community in such an incorporation.

Support for the Coalition's plan came recently from speakers at a cable conference co-sponsored by Massachusetts Educational Television and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Initial Boston applicant (and Community Caucus President of the Boston Community Media Council, Inc.) James Dilday highlighted the plan's feature of non-segregated channels, applauding the Coalition's work in this area.

Following Dilday, George Stoney commented that the plan is "one of the most imaginative I've ever heard of." Stoney said the plan brings to mind the Robert Kennedy quote which keynote speaker Nicholas Johnson had urged upon the conference earlier: "Some men see things that are, and ask, 'Why?' I dream things that never were, and ask, 'Why not?'"

In Boston there has been a franchising process in which a war has been waged on the public's behalf for stakes about which the public itself has been largely unaware. This unawareness has been perpetuated by willful City decisions. Yet, despite that, the process has created the possibility, at least, for a remarkable access system. To make that possibility a reality, it will now be necessary for representatives of Boston's institutions and residents to develop a high degree of cooperation.

Rob McCausland is clerk and a founding member of the Cable Television Access Coalition, Inc.

Expectations vs. Reality in Atlanta

"Is There Life After Franchising for Municipal Channels?"

by Michael Langley

Early Greek culture produced the sage admonition, "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip." A counterpart to this cautionary note may be emerging from the cable TV franchising interactions of local governments and private telecommunications corporations. The cable adage might say, "Many unmet hopes arise between the proposal and the franchise."

Atlanta, Georgia's experiences during the first fifteen months of its cable franchise with its promised six municipally-operated public service channels offers valuable lessons to cities and cable companies alike. These lessons range from the critically important role of local government regulation, to the fact that 400 MHz technology is currently *beyond* the proven operational state-of-the-art for cable technology in a large urban area, to the uncontested importance of a franchise agreement as a leverage point for a local government getting specific services.

As of late April, 1981, the state of Atlanta's cable system might best be described as fluid. There are two municipal service channels available, but the City has no video production equipment. Furthermore, "Reaganomics" may have endangered the City's grant proposal for such equipment. It was a complex set of processes that got the City all dressed up and no way to show on its municipal channels.

Atlanta's franchising experience was probably only a variation on a theme that is being played out (or has played itself out) in every major urban area of the country. The franchising process in Atlanta included a lot of company "hype" about number of channels, obvious "renting of influential citizens" by the cable company, as part of its strategy to get the City's franchise, and the absence of or ignoring of significant technical information by Atlanta City officials in making the decision to award a franchise to Cable Atlanta, Inc.

The system was to be the premier example of the 54 channel, 400 MHz technology. In the solicited request for proposal material presented to the City, the Company building the system, Cable Atlanta, Inc., told Atlanta that a total of 95 channels would be provided through the Home Subscriber Network (54 channels) and the Special Services Network (41 channels), the latter network designed for selected public and private, non-profit institutions. In effect, the Company agreed to build two separate cable trunk and distribution systems in Atlanta.

According to the franchise proposal, Atlanta would have six government access channels: two channels reserved for city government, a third channel to be shared by city government and the U.S. House of Representatives' C-Span programming, a fourth channel for the city's police and fire departments use and fifth and sixth channels for use by the city's library system. The Company's franchise proposal stated nothing about video production or playback equipment for the City and nothing was stated about the amount of personnel (or time) needed to develop programming for the proposed six-pack of municipal channels.

The franchise proposal did state that the Company's central studio and remote facilities would be fully available for government use. The Company's proposal did offer to provide technical assistance and training to City personnel in video production. In addition, the Company's proposal promised alphanumeric information capacity to the City sufficient to allow for the bi-weekly cablecasting of the City Council agenda (which is as long as 40 double-spaced, typed pages) or the cablecasting of a series of questions/answers (the franchise proposal listed 41 such questions) pertaining to government services. The franchise proposal offered, via the 41 channel

Special Services Network, teleconferencing and staff training capabilities to City officials. There was, though, no mention in the Company's franchise proposal of equipment relative to these latter two services.

For the City's part, its officials acted as if they believed that the City would get everything in the Company's proposal. The subsequent franchise agreement negotiated by the City and the Company (and signed on February 6, 1980) is over 180 pages in length and makes only four references to the City's channels. In two of the references the channels are simply listed within the tiers of service the Company will offer. The third reference is to the fact that there will be no charge for using government access channels. The fourth reference states, "Cable service and installation for one outlet (presumably for alphanumeric information transmittal) shall be provided free to the City at City Hall" The two library channels, the remaining two government channels, are handled by a separate agreement in that the library system is governed by an appointed board rather than being governed directly by the City. These two channels are a part of the proposed 41 channel Special Services Network.

During the franchising period, and the subsequent contract negotiating period, the City never analyzed in a systematic fashion how it would program municipal channels. For example, from 9:00 a.m. to midnight with two full-time channels, there are 210 hours a week of programming time. Can any local government in the country even program 40 hours a week on a consistent basis? The City also did not indicate the equipment and space it would need to provide programming.

For its part the Company suggested in its franchise proposal how the municipal access channels could be programmed. Under the franchise contract, to which the Company

agreed, the Company is required only to provide government channels with alphanumeric remote terminals, to wire City Hall with coaxial cable and to wire the Central Library and twenty-one of its branches. On its own the Company has agreed to give the City \$20,000 to be used to purchase video playback equipment for the municipal government channel. However, the City currently lacks the staff to use the equipment.

Fifteen months (May, 1981) into the franchise period, the state of Atlanta's municipal access channels is greatly diminished from what was portrayed in the Company's request for proposal "hype." None of the municipal access channels are carrying any video programming. Because of diverse and protracted delays with the development of the 400 MHz equipment, the Company is providing only 33 of its promised 54 channels (two channels have been removed by the FCC because of possible interference with communications at the local airport) and only two of its promised six municipal channels. The City apparently has no legal mechanism, at this point, for holding anyone accountable for the failure of the Company's 54 channel equipment to function.

The only current programming on a municipal government channel is alphanumeric. The City has a 40-page (a page contains approximately 384 character spaces which is equal to about six typewritten lines) microprocessor memory capacity for generating City government-related information. This capacity will allow for the transmittal of less than 10% of a typical City council agenda. The company intends eventually to locate 10 remote alphanumeric terminals at Atlanta City Government and Board of Education Sites.

The only sustained effort made to provide any municipally-oriented programming has required that the program be taped by using the library's video production facilities and cablecasting the tape on the public access channel. The program is a weekly series in which City Councilmembers are interviewed about issues "On The Agenda" of the Atlanta City Council.

As a temporary expedient and due to the strident complaining of one Councilmember, Cable Atlanta, Inc. has offered use of the Company's

public access equipment to tape bi-weekly City Council meetings that will be cablecast on the municipal government channel.

The franchise agreement requires the City to exercise a regulatory role over the cable company. The City's regulatory role has fallen through the gaps of the unfilled position of the Office of Telecommunications. To address a flood of subscriber complaints and to deal more generally with the regulatory failings of the executive branch of City Government, the City Council established a subcommittee in January, 1981, to review the state-of-the-operations of cable in Atlanta. At this time it would appear that this subcommittee's legal authority and political persuasion, combined with manufacturers debugging the 400 MHz equipment, along with the January, 1982, results of the first biannual renegotiation of the franchise agreement, will determine if Atlanta's municipal government channels continue to be all dressed up with no way to show.

The Company's exaggerated-sounding claims made during the franchising period have not yet been backed up by performance.

There seem to be five major lessons that emerge from Atlanta's first fifteen months of experience in the vanguard of cable TV "megasystems."

First, it must be understood clearly that a cable company's franchise proposal is a marketing tool that carries no binding legal responsibility for the company or accountability by a local government. It is the franchise agreement alone, which is a legal contract between a local governmental unit and the company. In short, if enforceable-by-penalty standards, services, time deadlines, equipment or particular telecommunication features are not specified in the franchise agreement or contract in a clear way, the company has no binding obligation to deliver on its promises.

Second, the franchise agreement that is developed between the local government and the cable company is the only legal source for ensuring the development of municipal service

channels with video, audio or alphanumeric programming. These channels are not revenue producing for the company, so there is a tremendous incentive in the post-franchise granting period for the company to keep its resource commitments to a minimum.

Third, there is general acknowledgment that local governments need the expertise of consultants during the franchise granting period. Equally important, and maybe even more important, is the ongoing assistance of a cable expert for the local government during the development of a legally binding franchise agreement after the awarding of the franchise.

Fourth, a highly skeptical attitude by any governmental unit granting or renegotiating a franchise must be taken toward the 400 MHz technology needed to produce a 54 channel system. A community is far better served by a system that has a balance between available access channels (for example, one public access, one municipal access and one leased access channel), and adequate resources to develop programming, than by a system offering a multitude of channels but no means with which to utilize them.

Fifth, the existence of a clause in the franchise agreement requiring renegotiation of the franchise agreement every two years offers the only real hope for municipal programming in Atlanta. The City's "cable consciousness" and knowledge of what is needed to effectively use a channel will be much higher when the franchise agreement is renegotiated than it was when it was first negotiated.

It would be nice to end this article with all issues tied neatly together. Such an ending would not reflect the real world situation. CATV in Atlanta is still in an early development stage and a May, 1982, examination should reveal a very different set of circumstances that will include a renegotiated franchise agreement — and maybe video programming on at least one governmental access channel.

Michael Langley, Ph.D., is Senior Policy Analyst on the Atlanta City Council Staff.

Analysis of Cable TV Designs for New Markets

compiled by Brian Owens

The following figures are based on an analysis of six markets, all evaluated by the Cable Television Information Center: Omaha, Cincinnati, Dallas, five Minneapolis suburbs in a consortium, Mesquite (Texas), and Ft. Worth. Thirty-one cable TV companies' applications were used to determine the following averages; among these are eight of the ten largest cable television companies in the country.

1. Average rate for highest, non-interactive tier of service was \$7.56 for 50.6 activated channels.
2. Fifteen of 31 cable television companies offered free "universal" cable TV service for the public. The number of channels offered ranged from 4 to 18.
3. Every cable TV company offered home security services, including fire, medical, and burglary protection.
4. Average capital expenditure per household bid by all the companies was \$246, with a range from \$29 to \$387 per household.
5. Average market penetration for basic cable television service was 53.4%, with a range from 41% to 69%.
6. Average market penetration for pay television service was 50.88%, or 95% of cable TV subscribers for those markets.
7. Average monthly revenue expected per subscriber was \$21.37, with a range from \$12.10 to \$48.
8. Average personnel expense for local cable programming per subscriber per year was \$7.80, with a range of \$2 to \$21.61.
9. The number of local programming employees averaged one per 3,053 subscribers.

10. Average capital expenditures per household for an institutional network was \$4.14, with a range from \$.82 to \$33.77.

11. Average capital expenditure per household for public access and local origination was \$21.34.

12. Average rate of return based on CTIC method, was 11.6%, excluding Ft. Worth bids (CTIC evaluation not completed as of date).

13. For institutional networks, operators offered an average of 24 channels downstream and 15 channels upstream.

14. The average proportion of the lengths of the institutional network to the subscriber network was 37.2%. Nine companies used 25% as the proportion, and 5 companies built the institutional network throughout the community (100%).

15. Most of the companies discussed switching plans, network management, and terminal equipment supplied for the institutional network.

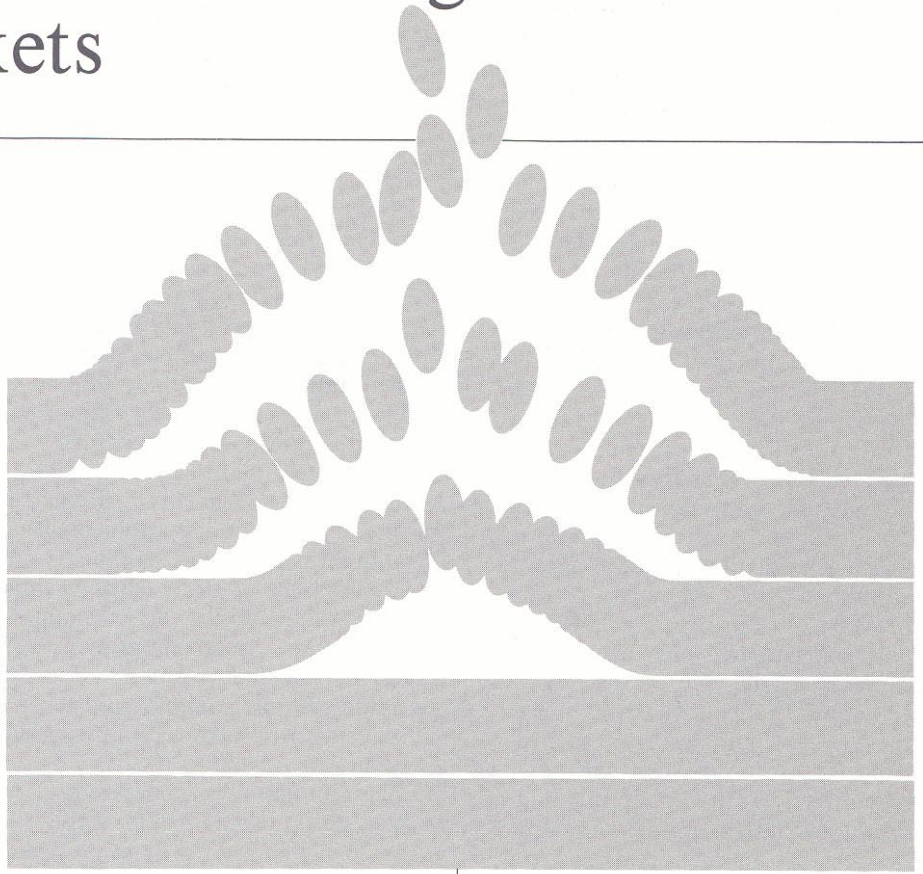
16. The estimated local programming expenses per cable subscriber for the 5th year of operation averaged \$9.31.

17. The companies dedicated an average of 46% of the local programming budget specifically to public access.

18. The cable television companies bid an average of 14 shared or dedicated channels for access.

19. All 31 companies bid studios and use of equipment at no charge to the public. Seventy percent bid a mobile van, and most dedicated special facilities to schools, libraries, and/or community agencies. Many funded non-profit agencies as public access administrators and facilitators.

Brian Owens is an independent cable consultant and Professor at Houston-Tilliston College, Austin, TX.



Assuring Information Equality:

Universal Service is a Realistic Option

by Nancy Jesuale

Universal service, the city-wide offering of a limited number of channels, or other programming services at no monthly charge, can be a desirable arrangement if the tiering structure of rates and services prevents the average subscriber from paying a "subsidy" to allow a universal tier.

Universal service has the social benefit of allowing all citizens, regardless of income, to access some of the information on the cable. Additionally, the cable operator may be able to pick up more basic subscribers by marketing through the universal tier.

Tiering, as opposed to channel-by-channel pay consumption, causes subscribers to buy "blocks" of channels to access certain services. A "universal" tier often consists of several access channels, the local origination channel, and perhaps the local broadcast channels, and one or two satellite services, such as C-SPAN, which are free to the cable operator; usually around 12 channels in all.

The Costs of Universal Service

There are issues involved in making a "free" service available to some, at the cost of others. Universal service consumers receive free service at the expense of paying subscribers or commercial users of the system, whose combined monthly payments constitute the revenues of the system. This is what is referred to as the **subsidy** of universal service users. The burden may fall on the average subscriber, on the consumers of special cable services, such as banks, hospitals and schools, or on advertisers who use the system. The extent of subsidization depends directly on the pricing and tiering structure the company proposes.

How Will Universal Service Affect Basic Subscriber Rates?

When services are "tiered," the subscribers pay for the cost of the services on that tier (that is, the operator's cost of providing those services) plus some portion of the overall cost of operating the system. Costs often are not *directly* assessed on a per-subscription-per-tier basis.

Often, where universal service is proposed, the company will charge for installation of universal service, thus negating any cross-subsidy of these charges by other system users.

Additionally, the cost of installation is much lower when the company makes "marketing passes," that is, when the company is first selling service door-to-door in an area. If the option to install universal service is available on the first marketing pass, the cost of installation will be far less significant.

Depending on the number of universal service consumers, the cost of maintenance, overhead and programs which the operator does not pay for will be variable, but small. If too many subscribers are universal subscribers, there will be no rate base. However, if there were no demand for pay services, chances are the operator would not be willing to build the cable system in the first place. Generally, one can expect that there will be enough demand for good pay services at a fair price to keep the marginal cost of universal subscribership manageable.

Probably the least desirable way of subsidizing universal service is that of passing costs to paying subscribers. Perhaps the best idea is to absorb the cost of universal service through those who can best afford it, the commercial users and advertisers who are gaining a profit from use of the cable system. Then, although a subsidization is taking place, it is not the average subscriber whose rates are higher; those who make a choice to gain a profit over the system will pay slightly more.

The Benefits of Universal Service

For the city the benefits of universal service may include:

- greater distribution of community-based, citizen-produced programming;
- greater numbers of people receiving special communications services supplied by agencies responsible to the public;
- greater numbers of people with access to emergency notification;
- more equitable distribution of the cable communications resource by providing some cable services to persons who would not normally be able to pay for services;
- opportunity on the part of local governments to conduct public hearings and city council meetings via cable, with the assurance that the home bound and low income have access to the cable;
- better reception of local broadcast signals.

For the company, the benefits of universal service may include:

- opportunity to put a drop in significantly more households in hopes that they will upgrade to a pay service;
- continuous direct marketing outlet to those homes who want service beyond universal service and who can upgrade as easily as making a phone call;
- opportunity to install each drop only once;
- benefit of providing a public service, which may enhance the company's community standing;
- greater overall penetration, i.e., the percentage of homes taking cable service of the total number of homes passed.

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Madison's Citicable-12 Struggles for Life While Bringing City Issues Closer to People

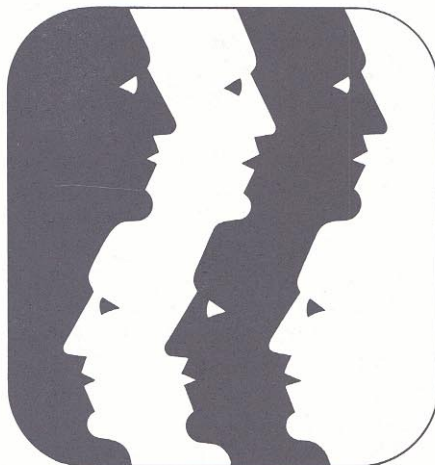
by Andy Beecher

Madison, Wisconsin, is the State's capitol, and the location of a large university known for political activism. It is not uncommon to find a bus driver having a spirited debate with a Professor of engineering on the politics of energy as the overcrowded leviathon traverses the city's isthmus, or to find a City Council meeting drawing 100 supporters and detractors into a tiny gallery when a tavern's liquor license is up for renewal. It is here that we operate CitiCable 12, the designated governmental access cable channel.

With modest facilities in the City-County Building, a full-time staff of three runs the Municipal Video Service (MVS), the operating agency of CitiCable 12. Together with our part-time work-study students and interns, we produce and cablecast programming intended to make City government and its programs and services more accessible and understandable to the citizens of Madison.

Since the beginning of 1980, we have been an agency of the Madison Public Library, though the function existed for five years prior to this time as part of the role of the City's Cable Television Office (which was primarily a regulatory office). In the reorganization of the City's cable TV activities, the regulatory/administrative function was transferred to the Department of Administration and the municipal programming activities became MVS, a division of the Library.

A variety of program formats are presented on the channel, including "live" and taped coverage of public proceedings, talk programs, "live" call-ins, documentaries, instructional films and videotapes, conferences, and "bulletin board" printed information. In addition, representing the Library's interest in expanding its cultural/educational activities in the community, we occasionally provide coverage of performances, lectures, and workshops at the Library and elsewhere in the area.



Our programming includes: gavel-to-gavel coverage of the meetings of the City Council, County Board of Supervisors, Board of Education, Public Health Commission and Cable TV Regulatory Board; public hearings, budget review meetings; etc.

Regular program features include:

- "Jobline," which features employment information and opportunities, presented in cooperation with City, County, and State personnel divisions, and public and private sector openings through the Job Service.

- "City Scope," which features reports by City aldermen to their constituents, question-and-answer segments, and informative productions on City programs and services.
- Local election coverage, including interviews, features, and up-to-the-minute tallies of returns.
- Such cultural programming as "A Concert of Storytellers," and a program at the library featuring local woodcrafters.
- Fire Department Training — The Fire Department produces in-house training with MVS, and cablecasts it to its stations through CitiCable, saving transportation and consultant costs.
- Legal workshops for hearing impaired people.

We operate the channel 24 hours a day, with an average of 130 hours per month being "live" and taped video programming, and the remainder being provided by a character generator (featuring the where's, when's, how's and who's of City/County programs and services, as well as our own program schedule).

Though we haven't conducted extensive viewership surveys, many of our governmental officials who appear in programs on the channel have indicated that they receive a great deal of feedback from constituents who have seen them on the channel. In addition, a recent survey conducted for the City as part of a 5-year

franchise review revealed that approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of those Madison residents polled favored the continued funding by the City of CityCable 12 and its sibling, the Madison Community Access Center (MCAC).

Last year, however, immediately prior to the commencement in Madison of "The Cities and Cable Television," a major national conference, co-sponsored by the NFLCP, the Mayor recommended that all City general funds budgeted for municipal and public access be terminated with the 1981 budget. It was indeed ironic that the Mayor delivered the welcome address at the conference.

The City had suffered a relatively large financial blow, in the form of a shortfall from the state, at the eleventh hour of the 1981 budget process. The Library was told that it would need to cut MVS, along with another information service, or find areas in which it could make up the financial difference. Library agencies, including MVS, responded by cutting some aspects of their budgets to reflect the anticipated lean year. In addition, many other City departments and agencies responded to the potential cessation of MVS services by submitting letters of support. Individuals and community groups spoke at public hearings. The NFLCP Board of Directors, meeting in Madison during the conference, sent a letter to the budget review committee and Mayor, expressing the organization's concern for the future of what have been viable examples of municipal and public access.

The Board of Estimates and City Council voted strongly in favor of restoring funding for MVS and MCAC to the budget, and here we are today.

Something should be said, however, for what I think are some of the major things we need to overcome for successful municipal access.

The first is the need for a studio. This need not be a first-class video sales catalogue facility with all the latest in hardware. More appropriate would be a space which would be,

first, conducive to dialogue, that would make people want to use the area even if televising their proceedings weren't possible. Then, it should also have all those things we need, like some lighting, video/audio hookups, color cameras that can function adequately under low light conditions, phone-in lines, acoustics, etc. Ideally, it wouldn't look, feel, or even smell like a TV studio. But it would have some distinct advantages for MVS:

- It would attract people to use the medium.
- It would allow "live" call-ins, which we've been able to do only when we've rented the cable company's studio, which is nowhere near City Hall. This, we feel, is extremely important, and an area in which we've been hoping to considerably expand our activities. This would create a much more interactive format on CitiCable 12. Some of our programming has involved dialogue between community groups and City agencies/officials, but phone interaction would expand these activities significantly. Doing so would not only better serve the public's information needs, but would likely increase our viewership, and, of course, community support.
- It would save much-needed time in setting up and striking our portable equipment for every production.

A second area is that the cable company only has about $\frac{1}{3}$ penetration, which makes it difficult at times to convince agencies and community groups to put forth the effort to produce a program or series they know will only reach a small segment of the community. However, with the company's planned increase in channel offerings, this might become less of a problem.

The third is (of course) our funding base. As a Library agency, MVS must apply for virtually its total operating budget, through the Library, from the City's general funds. This is in spite of the fact that the City collects a 3% subscriber revenue fee from the cable operator, which currently accounts for approximately \$90,000 per year (and since our 12

channel system is expanding this year to 28 channels, and a rate increase has recently been passed, we would expect this sum to be considerably higher in the next couple years). These revenues are not designated in the ordinance for programming purposes, but only for "regulatory and administrative purposes."

The City has, however, funded the public and municipal access, as well as the administrative/regulatory function, at total levels gradually approaching this annual revenue.

The question is: Should these revenues guarantee at least a minimum *continued* funding of these services on the part of the City? This is a subject for considerable debate here, as it has been, and will continue to be in many cities. A steady funding base, in the form of a portion of the franchise fee, would certainly free up for more creative activities a good deal of staff time which is currently consumed in the annual pie-cutting rites.

The remainder of 1981 appears to be a time in which we'll once again need to be diligent in our quest for continuation, particularly in light of all the much touted Federal and State revenue cuts to municipalities.

We know we're an extremely inexpensive means by which the City can promote an informed electorate, and that we represent great potential future cost savings for in-house telecommunications. And there are those who will agree, but there are also those who would sooner see the cable revenues make up for general shortfalls and see the City cut MVS.

What you've just been presented with is a situation that was built within the political/economic realities of cable TV in the 1970's. It has grown gradually, without the franchising battles and the new technologies of the early 1980's. It will be one that will hopefully continue to develop through the 80's into a dynamic, interactive means of communication in Madison, Wisconsin.

Interaction

The Misuse of Term "Interactive"; *Ability of People to Talk to People Should be Assured in Cable Design*

by Jerry Richter

Although the Berks Community Television (BCTV) programming has been described as "interactive" (see article on page 8), the current overuse of that term to describe all forms of two-way transmission of signals on a cable system calls for some clarification.

The term "interactive" has been applied to such cable services as fire alarm, burglar alarm, digital polling devices, etc., as well as to two-way audio and video conferencing, which is another term which describes the BCTV configuration. Of these, polling is the configuration most frequently described as permitting viewer "participation."

There is a considerable difference between the interactive programming which takes place in Reading on the one hand and polling services on the other. In the former instance individuals use the cable system to communicate directly with each other over geographic distances, face-to-face on a split screen by going to a neighborhood center or by participating from

home by telephone, without a delay system, in a conversational manner. The result is a spontaneous and dynamic communication system in which any participant can initiate an interaction and articulate a message.

Because switching is done at the head end and the speaker and listener are combined on a split screen image, the face-to-face contact is accomplished using only a single subscriber channel. If the switching point is located somewhere other than the head end, downstream channel economy becomes a consideration since a separate channel is required to carry each location's signal to the switching point. In Reading, the subscriber channel used for BCTV's interactive programs is included in basic service, an important consideration when considering government uses.

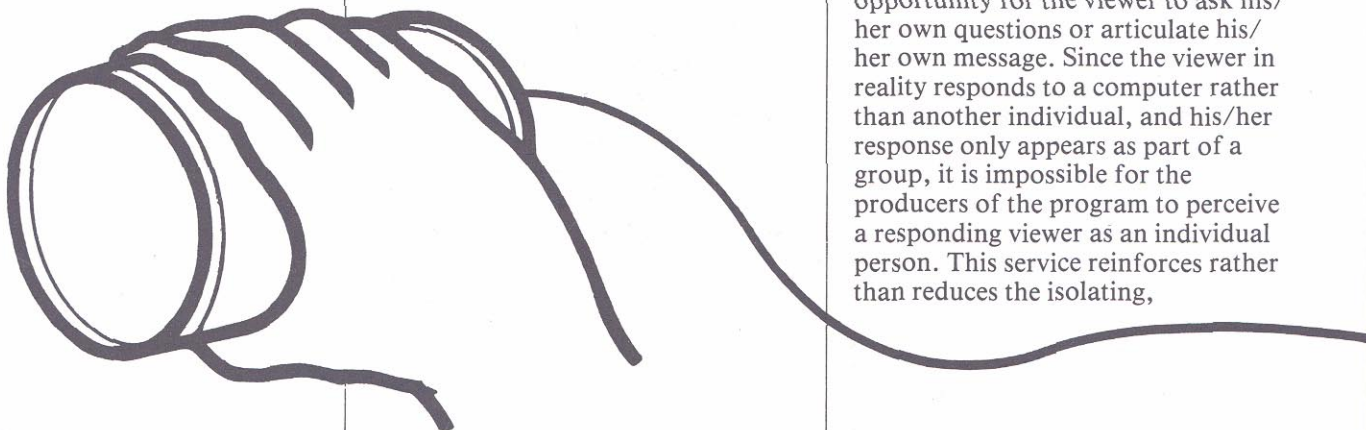
Polling type systems operate quite differently. In this case the subscriber uses a key pad device to enter information to a central computer. This information is usually in the form of a response to a question posed by someone on camera at the studio location who instructs the viewers which buttons to press and when to press them. Responses tend to be in

the form of "yes - no," "agree - disagree," etc. Responses are tabulated by the central computer and displayed as percentages of viewers responding (76% yes, 15% no, 9% no opinion).

There are several important differences between this type of two-way service and the interactive programming which has been so valuable to the City of Reading.

1. Polling services are usually placed on the most expensive level of basic service. Since there is no model for the use of public "response centers" for use by those who are not subscribers to the service, participation in polling programs is limited to those with the economic means to pay for this service. If used for public hearings and other citizen/government dialogue purposes the cost of the service becomes a further barrier to citizen participation.

2. The viewer can only respond to questions articulated by another. There is no opportunity to modify one's response with a "yes, but . . ." The danger of manipulation of the viewers by the way the questions are phrased is obvious. There is also no opportunity for the viewer to ask his/her own questions or articulate his/her own message. Since the viewer in reality responds to a computer rather than another individual, and his/her response only appears as part of a group, it is impossible for the producers of the program to perceive a responding viewer as an individual person. This service reinforces rather than reduces the isolating,



depersonalizing nature of television.

3. The fact that responses must be in a multiple choice format could lead to the oversimplification of complex municipal issues. There are few problems whose solutions require citizen participation which can be answered by yes or no and be based on a survey of subscribers who belong only to the higher socio/economic levels.

While there may be many commercially valuable uses of polling services, in view of the above difficulties its use as a citizen participation tool seems extremely limited.

Although the two-way audio/video programming which is utilized in Reading, and the polling services described above are significantly different, in the loose and undefined "cablelese" of the present franchising mania they are both referred to as "interactive." This confusion in meaning works to the cable company's advantage.

In the delicate negotiations which accompany the granting of an urban cable franchise there are opposing forces at work. The cable company is attempting to provide only those services which will prove to be commercially feasible and return a profit. This is quite proper and in keeping with the company's position as a profit making organization with an obligation to produce a return on investment.

On the other hand, the franchise granting authority has a responsibility to insure that the entity which obtains the franchise, and therefore will enjoy a *de facto*, though not necessarily a *de jure*, monopoly on the telecommunications resources of the community, returns a commensurate degree of social benefit through its operations. This is also proper and in keeping with the concept that local government is the best guardian of the community's public interest.

In terms of "interactive" services this difference in viewpoint is manifested in the company's "willingness," if not eagerness, to propose alarm/alert, polling and other computer mediated services, which have the potential of creating a profit. Polling services, for instance,

can be profitable by providing a saleable base for such purposes as market research, etc. Such uses are not necessarily in the public interest.

Interactive services, such as the two-way audio/video serving Reading do not necessarily promise an increase in profits although the social benefits to the community may be great. It is therefore to be expected that cable companies will attempt to equate the term "interactive" to those services which are most beneficial to them and to downplay other meanings of the term which are not commercially desirable. It is also to be expected that municipal officials will seek those interactive services which are of most benefit to the community.

While both systems provide for the return of signals from locations within the community to the cable head end, a system with polling capability would not necessarily be able to provide for fully interactive audio and video as in Reading. Specific monitoring and switching equipment is required which is not needed for polling.

Even a proposed system which is described by the franchisee as "fully interactive" may not be able to provide this capability if "interactive" is used by the company to describe a computer mediated feed back system. The cost of providing the needed head end equipment for two-way audio/video use is roughly equivalent to the cost of one mobile van, a highly visible expenditure which many companies are more than willing to make and which, in the long run, may prove less valuable to the community.

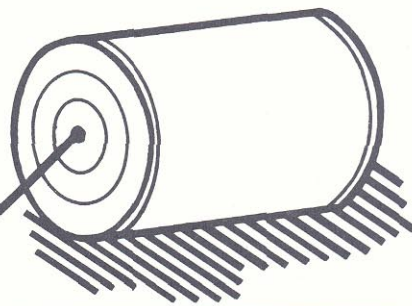
The success of the city's use of interactive television in Reading is based on the fact that this medium has opened significant, new lines of communication between elected officials and citizens, making government truly accessible to citizens and making officials more acutely aware of the needs of their constituents.

If other municipalities want to take advantage of this medium in order to increase dialogue and communication, steps should be taken early in the franchising process to insure that this capability will be included.

The technical requirements for two-way audio/video teleconferencing among multiple sites should be specified. The sites desired to be used as neighborhood centers should be clearly described. The manner of control of the channels allocated to community interest interactive programming and access to the central switching point should also be specified. It may be best to place this control in the hands of the non-profit access corporation rather than the cable company's local origination department.

These are only a few of the points which must be addressed in the request for proposals and the ordinance. Detailed information on the factors to be considered in requiring specific interactive services and on RFP and Ordinance language in this area can be obtained by contacting the NFLCP.

In Reading, Pennsylvania, interactive cable has become a dynamic and integral part of community life. This did not happen overnight. It continues to evolve with increasing involvement on the part of the cable system, the City, and, through Berks Community Television, the community at large. With proper planning in the franchising or re-franchising process, the unique communication medium enjoyed by the City of Reading can become a part of any cabled community.



Jerry Richter is Executive Director of Berks Community Television.

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Send name & address with check to:
NFLCP
3700 Far Hills Avenue
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Bulletin

"The Consumer and Cable Television," a recent conference sponsored by the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting and the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, is available on audiocassette from Replay Services. The conference's sixteen workshops and seminars dealt with consumer protection issues related to cable television. Speakers included representatives of media and consumers' organizations, the advertising profession, the cable industry, and government agencies. For a free brochure, write to Replay Services, P.O. Box 4292, Madison, Wisconsin 53711.

Publications

Resource File is designed to inform and update the postsecondary community about the current uses of telecommunications for reaching students in off-campus settings. Published by the Center for Learning and Telecommunications which was established by the American Association for Higher Education, the *Resource File* features an annotated bibliography and abstracts of recent telecommunications articles and a "quicksheet" primer to help

institutions deal with the process of negotiating cable television franchises. Limited free copies of this edition are available to educators and technologists from the Center for Learning and Telecommunications, AAHE, One Dupont Circle, Suite 780, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 293-6440.

Video and Cable Guidelines edited by Leslie Chamberlin Burk and Roberto Esteves, updates and expands the original work, *Video and Cable Communications, Guidelines for Librarians*. It includes eight chapters on various facets of video in libraries and reports from 343 libraries of all types on their video activities and experiences. \$6.75, 461 pages. Send orders to: Library and Information Technology Association, ALA Headquarters, 50 East Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

The "Special Film & Video Issue" of the periodical "The Working Arts" is available from the Bay Area Lawyers for the Arts for a postage and handling charge of \$1. Compacted into 12 pages are articles on copyright, distribution contracts and information on business resources for the film or video producer. Contact: BALA Publications, Fort Mason, Building B, San Francisco, CA 94123.



Community Television Review
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National Federation of Local Cable Programmers 1980 Report to the Members

Since its beginning in 1976, NFLCP has taken on public education projects, hosted regional and national events, and responded to regulatory and legislative proceedings in an effort to secure a place for access and other kinds of local programming within the cable industry. Community interest over cable's potential as a new local communications system is growing nationwide and competition for cable franchises is keen.

As a result, local programming and public access facilities throughout the country are now scheduled to begin operations in unprecedented numbers. NFLCP has acted to insure the success of many of these new operations by

designing its 1980 public education thrust to emphasize the experience of older programming centers in practical, low-cost, and innovative approaches to cable programming.

Response to NFLCP's efforts has been enthusiastic and membership continues to grow. Concerned citizens, city governments, and access programmers have increased their demand for expertise and services that NFLCP provides. Organizations and individuals have contributed increasing amounts of volunteer effort through NFLCP to help people nationwide who want cable television to serve their communications needs.

Access '80 The Event of the Year

One occasion which epitomized this direction of NFLCP was the national membership conference "Access '80" held in July at East Lansing, Michigan. The 400-plus attendance was double that of the 1979 convention, attracting significantly larger numbers of municipal officials, cable industry representatives, members of citizen cable advisory groups and educators. Participation by practically every established access facility in the Midwest, Central States, Northeast, and Mid-Atlantic NFLCP regions plus delegations of programmers from all other corners of the U.S. formed an invaluable base of expertise and heightened the sense that this was the access event of the year.

Panels and workshops were tracked to give special attention to the issues of highest concern to newcomers about to get cable in their cities;

- franchising and local regulatory issues
- how to develop and sustain successful access operations
- ways cable has served special audiences
- new technical developments in the industry

In all cases it was stressed that through provision of access channels, adequate equipment, and a community access facilitator, anyone — municipal workers, educators, students, senior citizens, handicappers, church groups, artists, social service providers — could be a "local cable programmer." The cooperation evident in successful operation of the municipal, library, school, university, and public access channels in East Lansing itself impressed most as one of the best models for access in the nation.

The need for broad-based local support for access was brought to the fore when conference goers and planners were faced with a surprise announcement that an impending U.S. Senate bill would seemingly render void requirements made by any government body concerning local cable programming. Additional proposals of the legislation (S.B. 2827) so stunned participants that an agenda for action developed instantly among the diverse groups assembled. The issue triggered repeated probes in almost every workshop and panel into the proper role of government, communities, and the industry in assisting the growth of access programming.

The opposition generated towards the bill and other convention activities drew far more publicity than any prior NFLCP event. All local mass media carried news of the proceedings and/or editorials against the Senate bill. Feature stories appeared in *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Detroit News*. National trade magazines — *Cablevision*, *TVC*, *Multi-Channel News*, and *Videography* — also carried stories on the event.

A video summary of the convention was produced by NFLCP and shown nationally on Home Box Office. Executive Producer Randy Van Dalsen lined up former and current cable access volunteers along with a public television crew donated by WKAR for production of the two-hour program.

For the third year, National Endowment for the Arts contributed \$8,000 to the conference. Other contributors were United Cable TV, East Lansing Cable Communications Commission, ATC, and Tele-Communications, Inc. Additional corporate sponsors were Continental Cablevision and Sammons Communications. Local sponsors were the City of East Lansing, MSU Lifelong Education Programs, National Cable Company, MSU Department of Telecommunications, MSU Department of Instructional and Public TV, East Lansing Public Schools, East Lansing Public Library, and the Convention Bureau of Greater Lansing.

Cable and the Cities Focus of the Year

Opportunities for cities involved in franchising to meet with others that have completed the process was stated as a priority for 1980 by delegates to the 1979 convention. Accordingly in 1980, NFLCP functioned as a source of information on planning non-commercial cable channels for cities drafting their own telecommunications plans and franchising.

Based upon the experience of its membership in access and local origination administration and programming, NFLCP took on three major projects in 1980 to serve cities in effective development of local cable programming.

NFLCP Conference for Cities

Co-Sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Extension, NFLCP hosted "The Cities and Cable TV" conference in Madison in October 1980. Sessions dealt with franchising, community and municipal access, and ongoing regulation. Registration went beyond 400, exceeding the capacity of the conference center. UW Conference Coordinator Barry Orton estimated that an additional 200 were turned away in pre-registration during the two weeks prior.

The conference was not only attended heavily by cable industry representatives, but by citizen cable advisory board members and city officials from all parts of the U.S. Participants seemed pleased with the quantity and quality of the information offered them, so much so that many joined NFLCP as members. Municipal telecommunications officers caucused at the conference end to form their own professional association. *Variety* carried an extensive report on the three-day conference, also noting its positive impact on the City of Madison's decision on 1981 funding for public and municipal access operations in that city.

NFLCP Franchising Handbook

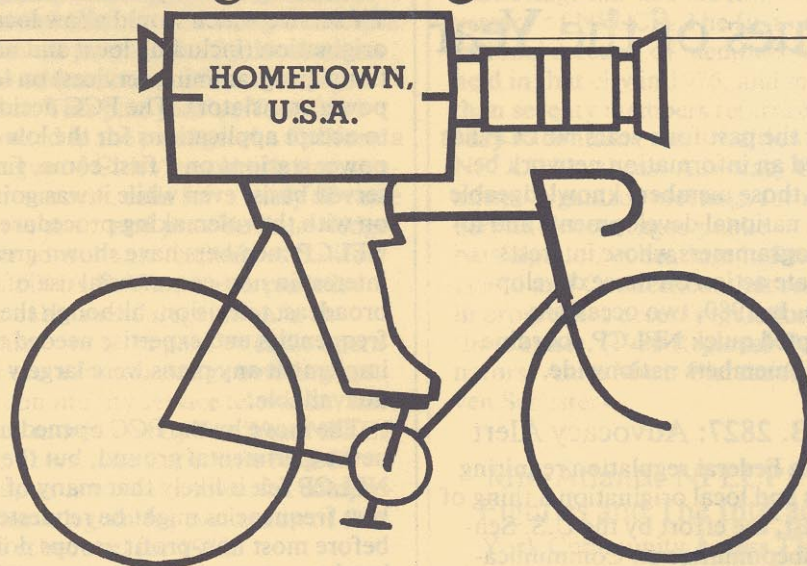
A preview edition of NFLCP's franchise primer was distributed to registrants at the Madison conference. Emphasizing local programming development and planning, the 100-page book included sample franchises, case studies, and instructions on the entire process of franchising. In the process of editing the book, NFLCP Board member Diana Peck culled information from programmers and cities throughout the country. Official publication is slated for early 1981, although advance orders had already been received by December 1980 from cities and planners eager for the information.

NFLCP Coverage of National League of Cities Convention

At the request of the League during the October cities and cable conference, NFLCP produced six hours of live coverage of "The 1980 Congress of Cities — 57th Annual Convention of the National League of Cities." Officials in more than 1,500 cities watched the program via satellite from Atlanta on December 1-3, 1980. Each day's two-hour cablecast was hosted by Georgia State Senator Julian Bond, and included live interviews plus video inserts of interviews or events happening earlier in the day. Despite technical difficulties on the third cablecast, viewers watching via Home Box Office at home were able to call in and participate in the live discussion on the exhibition floor, which included telecommunications issues.

Equipment and services for the program were donated by Cable Atlanta, Cox Cable Communications, Home Box Office, and Telecommunications, Inc. The League contributed to NFLCP volunteers' travel expenses and hired technical crews from Access Atlanta and the Atlanta Public Library. Executive Producer on the project for NFLCP was Frank Greif.

Hometown U.S.A. Local Programming of the Year



NFLCP's travelling video festival, in its third year, received 95 entries during the one-month solicitation for entrants. Though most were received from the eastern portion of the U.S., the total number of tapes received was substantially higher than in 1979. The 1980 NFLCP competition sponsor was Miami Valley Cable TV Council in Kettering, Ohio, where volunteer Hometown coordinators Greg Vawter and Jayne Anten did publicity, worked with judges, negotiated contracts with producers for distribution, and circulated the selected tapes.

Eight judges from Ohio screened all entries from start to finish. The selected tapes, representing the best of community cable, were premiered and the producers honored at the Access '80 conference in July:

"Loisaida — A Movement on its Own Accord!" (George Pessin/Edgar Price, Channel L Working Group, New York City)

"Janine" (Bernadette Mines/David Gumpel, New York University Video, New York City)

"Generation" (Kathy Coster, Baltimore County Public Library, Towson, Md.)

"Francis Through the Looking Glass" (David Skillicorn/Fain Gildea, San Francisco, Cal.)

"Worlds Apart" (Alan McGlade, Videomakers, San Diego, Cal.)

"You Can Start the Poetry Now, or News from Crazy Horse" (Daniel Pullen/Doug Hamilton, Moorhead State University, Minnesota)

"Kids Stuff" (Abby Lazar/Susan Miller, Syracuse, N.Y.)

"Women Take Back the Night!" (Iris Video, Minneapolis, Minn.)

"Loiseau de Feu (The Firebird)" (John Garrison Rauh, Guerilla Video, Inc., Baltimore, Md.)

"Bogatron Olympics" (John Dennehy, Bogatron Video, San Diego, Cal.)

"Host sites" for the travelling festival signed a contract to pay \$100 for ten days of unlimited non-commercial use on local access channels, with \$5.00 returned to the producer of each tape for each rental. The 1980 tour had been booked in 20 locations in 12 states and in Great Britain by the end of the year, with additional bookings scheduled into 1981.

S.B. 2827/Low Power TV Issues of the Year

For the past four years NFLCP has created an information network between those members knowledgeable about national developments and local programmers whose interests mandate action on those developments. In 1980, two occasions prompted quick NFLCP coordination of members nationwide.

S.B. 2827: Advocacy Alert

With Federal regulation requiring access and local origination a thing of the past, the effort by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Communications in June 1980 to prohibit all state and municipal requirements in this category was seen by access advocates and municipalities as a threat to insuring the best, most innovative, and most open communications system for communities.

NFLCP's announcement of the imminence of a Senate vote on the bill sent most members in protest to their Senators and to organize local opposition, with several meetings between members of Congress and concerned citizens to follow. In addition, NFLCP news releases on the event were given to local newspapers by members. The result was not only opposition to the bill, but a spark that ignited the major educational effort on access that had been needed. It was an opportunity to discuss cable access with legislators, their staffs, municipal officials, regulators, and reporters all across the country.

Though NFLCP-triggered opposition alone did not stop the bill, the measure was abandoned by the end of the year. However, the message on local control had reached the Subcommittee staff in full force from all sectors of the U.S., and the issues it raised remained on the minds of programmers and cities — as did memory of cable industry lobbyists' support of the bill.

Low-Power TV: Broadcast Access Push

In late 1980, the FCC proposed a rulemaking to set up a new broadcast TV service which would allow local origination (including local and national programming services) on low-power translators. The FCC decided to accept applications for the low-power stations on a first-come, first-served basis, even while it was going on with the rulemaking procedure. NFLCP members have shown great interest in non-commercial use of broadcast television, although the frequencies and expertise needed to implement any plans were largely unavailable.

The move by the FCC opened up new experimental ground, but the NFLCP felt it likely that many of the best frequencies might be requested before most non-profit groups doing local programming were even made aware of the opportunity. Jerry Richter, Jim Bell, Diana Peck, and Jean Rice quickly planned an intensive workshop and invited NFLCP member organizations in urban areas where frequencies might first be claimed by commercial operators. Appalachian Community Service Network (ACSN) donated meeting space and a small travel budget for participants and speakers.

Representatives from thirty organizations travelled to Washington, D.C. in December 1980 for a three day workshop. They received informational and technical backgrounds on low-power, had meetings with FCC lawyers and staff on the rule-making, received application forms, and learned about frequency searches. A few had their frequencies before the workshop ended.

Since NFLCP stipulated that participants ask other non-profit programmers in their region to contact the federation, within two weeks NFLCP had received requests for assistance from 40 other organizations across the country. Further information for those interested is planned for early 1981.

1980 Regional Caucuses The Heart of NFLCP

Throughout 1980, members residing in each of NFLCP's nine regions volunteered time, effort, and resources to share experiences and information on development of access channels and other areas of special interest. Most often one- or two-day conferences were planned by each region, featuring panels, discussions, and tape showings. As with most NFLCP events, many attended from cities just beginning the franchise process and seeking basic information on cable programming.

In 1980, a total of twelve full-fledged regional conferences were sponsored by NFLCP. In some regions donations were solicited from area cable systems to help finance the events, while in others meetings were subsidized solely through NFLCP membership pledges and in-kind donations from municipal and non-profit access group sponsors. In cases where extensive conferences were not feasible, regions often took on community education projects from which members could benefit. In 1980, all regions held business meetings to elect representatives to the NFLCP Board of Directors, to elect delegates to the national convention, and to coordinate regional projects.

Two regional conferences were held during 1980. The first, drawing forty participants, was sponsored by Cable TV 10 in Frankfort, Kentucky in April. The second was the "Cable TV as a Community Resource" conference sponsored by Monroe County Public Library Community Channel 3 in November 1980. The event drew sixty members including educators, religious leaders, programmers from QUBE, high school and university students, coordinators of other regional access centers, and citizens from municipalities franchising in the four-state area. A regional newsletter was published twice during 1980.

Midwest NFLCP: Two Regional Meetings

Members attended two regional events in 1980. The first was held in Iowa City, and the second took place just prior to the "Cities and Cable TV" conference in Madison, Wisconsin in October. At the latter members focused on access as a community service for minorities, funding of programs and programming centers, and distribution of locally-produced programs within the region. (1980 Regional Coordinator: Bill Newbern)

Southwest NFLCP: Two Conferences Focus on Franchising

This year saw the beginning of regional events in the Southwest region. The first conference was attended by many access programmers from around the nation, since it was held concurrently with the 1980 National Cable TV Association convention in Dallas in May. The second conference was hosted by the Cultural Cable Channel in New Orleans. Topic was "Franchising the South: Communities and Cable TV" for the November conference which drew over 120 people. Panel topics included minorities and cable, the industry's support of community programming, evaluating bids, and political action beyond the franchise stage. (1980 Regional Coordinator: Rev. Ed Deane)

Mountain States NFLCP: First Regional Meeting

Though most participants were from New Mexico, Colorado was also represented at that region's first meeting in April 1980, in Albuquerque. Twenty-one members selected their first regional coordinator and representative to the Board at that time, and NFLCP news was carried to all members through the newsletter of the host organization Quote . . . Unquote, Inc. of Albuquerque. A delegation to the national convention was also elected, representing Mountain States NFLCP for the first time since the NFLCP began. (1980 Regional Coordinators: Bill Makely/Denise Makely)

Far West NFLCP: AB 699 and Welcome for Access

Far West members did not host a regional meeting in 1980, but have concentrated on educating California cities on possibilities for local access and telecommunications development. This past year's efforts have resulted in the passage of a California League of Cities' resolution that supports access, calls for a study of cable in the state, and provides knowledgeable consultants to cities. A California bill (A.B.699), which provided for cable rate deregulation in exchange for a fee paid by cable operators to a foundation promoting use of community service television, has been monitored by Far West NFLCP members. The California NFLCP chapter is working toward a comprehensive legislative evaluation of this bill scheduled for 1982.

The region coordinated a one-day workshop on the potential of public access in Modesto as a welcome to the new access group that has formed in that city. Far West NFLCP also sponsored a hospitality room at the Western Cable Show in Anaheim in December, where members played tapes, demonstrated equipment, and shared information with more than sixty visitors. (1980 Regional Coord: Constance Carlson)

Northwest NFLCP: First Step to Organizing

The first regional organizational meeting was held in Seattle in June 1980, where a regional coordinator and board representative were elected. Since many members from the Northwest were unable to travel to the Access '80 convention, videotaped coverage of the national event produced by NFLCP was circulated to Northwest members. Seattle members have requested access provisions in franchising activity there, and Portland members have taped cable-related city council meetings and cable task force meetings to encourage the access effort there. (1980 Regional Coordinator: Adam Haas)

Northeast NFLCP: Fourth Anniversary

This year's regional conference in Cambridge marked the fourth anniversary of NFLCP. The first organizational meeting of members was held in that city in 1976, and more than seventy members returned in May to continue that tradition. NFLCP Northeast Advocacy Committee organized meetings for members and encouraged public participation in hearings in Rhode Island and Connecticut that resulted in progressive access regulations in those states. (1980 Regional Coordinators: Anna Marie Piersimoni/Steven Schuster)

Mid-Atlantic NFLCP: The Eighties and The Interactive

York Community Access TV was the organizational sponsor for the "Community Television in the Eighties" workshop held in York, PA, in May. Approximately 50 members attended workshops on topics such as neighborhood video, cable technology, and the philosophy of the cable ministry. The second regional conference was held in Reading, PA, in October, with over 100 conference participants and panelists attending. The "Interactive and Community Programming" conference demonstrated the topic firsthand by holding its initial session at five locations as far as 18 miles apart via two-way video cable television. Host of the conference was Berks Community Television, the non-profit organization programming that city's interactive system. (1980 Regional Coordinators: Jerry Richter/Harriet Moss)

International NFLCP

Though no NFLCP event has been held for international members, Canadian members have participated at regional meetings held by the Northeast NFLCP and at the Access '80 conference. This year also saw the addition of members in Israel and Guam.

Southeast NFLCP: Focus on Minorities and on the Arts

"Cable TV and the Arts" was the theme of the August conference sponsored by a wide variety of local arts groups, Access Atlanta, and NFLCP. Over 300 artists and access advocates attended. Southeast NFLCP sponsored "Minorities and Cable TV: The Last Frontier" in November to address the issues of programming, minority ownership and funding, recruitment and training for minorities in the industry, cross-ownership, and opportunities for community development. Over 100 people attended from across the nation.

Following the latter event, regional members began a project to exchange local programs. A videotaped summary of the conference was in post-production in December as part of that region's effort to distribute more information to members. An additional task force on alternative forms of ownership of media sent a delegation to NFLCP's December workshop on low-power television. (1980 Regional Coordinator: Jabari Simama)

Central States NFLCP: Four-State Summary of Access

The Access '80 Conference held in East Lansing, Michigan, gave members in that region a chance to demonstrate their solid base of expertise in access development. Among those representing the Central States were the East Lansing and Columbus, Indiana, access operations; the library-based center in Bloomington, Indiana; the programming arm of Frankfurt's municipally-owned system; and the cooperative municipal Miami Valley Cable TV Council in Kettering, Ohio.

NFLCP Task Force 1980 Summary

On-going tasks of the NFLCP are coordinated by established committees and work groups. Following are the principal accomplishments in each area, where NFLCP members donated money, time, and resources toward the advancement of local programming.

Advocacy Committee

Principal accomplishment was the coordination of opposition to S.B. 2827. Former committee coordinator Paige Amidon travelled to Washington, D.C. to uncover the details of the proposed bill two days prior to the annual membership convention. The 1980 Advocacy Coordinator Jay April followed up on the effort by making four trips to Washington, and over 400 telephone calls to cable regulatory officers, mayors, heads of consumer/media reform groups, and legislators.

Committee members assisted in the coordination of the educational campaign surrounding the issue. Paige Amidon drafted informational literature and press releases with the help of committee members at the convention. Jay April also alerted the staff of "The MacNeil-Lehrer Report" to the S.B. 2827 issue. The National League of Cities eventually appeared with the National Cable TV Association on the program for a discussion of both sides of the issue.

Whenever possible, the national committee supported regional efforts for access safeguards, such as in Rhode Island and Connecticut, and monitoring of A.B. 699 in California. Actions of the committee are funded by membership dollars and out-of-pocket contributions by individual members.

Community Education Committee

Committee Coordinator Carol Brown Eilber and former coordinator Jean Rice oversaw a long list of projects in 1980. With resources

made available by NFLCP members throughout the country, both answered daily requests for information, assistance, and referrals from members needing help. As of December 1980, Community Education Committee received approximately three to five requests per week by telephone and in the mail. Response to an article in *CTR* which requested information on various subjects and volunteers has been strong.

C/E Committee published two books during 1980. NFLCP's first national membership directory appeared in July. Edited by Anne Stonehocker, it contained the results of questionnaires sent to members. The publication was funded through membership dollars and volunteer help. The second publication was the franchise handbook edited by Diana Peck. Its expenses were also met through membership dollars and will be sold at special rates to members.

C/E organized this year's "special interest" conference on the cities and cable with the University of Wisconsin-Extension in October 1980. Plans for a second conference on consumer issues in cable for 1981 were made with co-sponsorship from the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting. A grant from the Federal Trade Commission has underwritten coordination of the consumer conference, while registration fees covered all costs of the cities' conference.

NFLCP began offering public information services to raise funds for operation of its national office. Contracts were established with the City of Atlanta for a municipal access channel ascertainment in November 1980 and assistance in planning for a telecommunications grant in December 1980. The University of Massachusetts also contracted for granted assistance in December 1980.

C/E addressed non-cable technology in the December informational workshop for urban member organizations on low-power broadcast TV. Also, a committee drafted a questionnaire in December which in 1981 will be sent to NFLCP organizations to evaluate their potential abilities to

serve as receivers and participants of Public Service Satellite Consortium programming and teleconferencing. The survey will assess interest in the project and technical feasibility of satellite interconnect.

Community Television Review (CTR)

Under the supervision of Tom Borrup, CTR's editor in chief, NFLCP's journal published three issues in 1980:

#1 Local Programming By the Community and For the Community (Winter 1980) (2,000 printed)

#2 Cable TV and Education (Spring 1980) (2,500 printed)

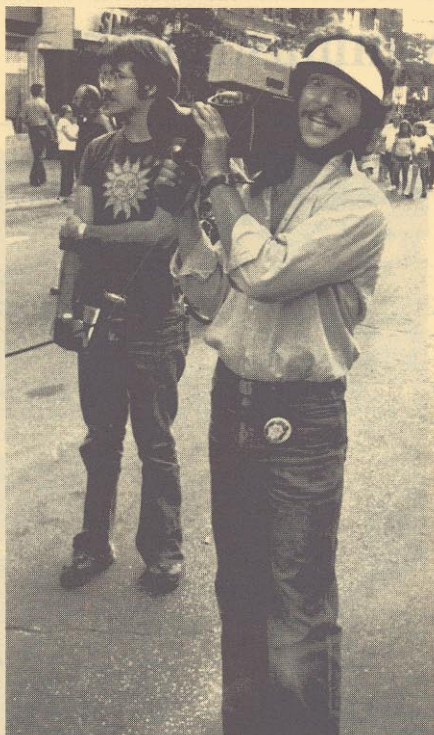
#3/4 (double issue) "Citizen Participation and Video for Social Change"/News from Access '80 (Summer/Fall 1980) (3,500 printed)

The biggest change for CTR was its move from its publishing center in Vermont in August 1980 after one-and-a-half years. Sharon Goldenberg and Louis de Liberto of the St. Johnsbury TV Co-op, along with other volunteers, took care of the management and circulation of the publication during that time.

As part of Tom Borrup's new position at University Community Video, Minneapolis, UCV planned for support services and staff time to be made available to NFLCP's publication. UCV intern Margaret Schulz has taken on shipments, billings, and marketing for CTR for 1980-81.

1980 saw an 83% growth in CTR subscriptions, mainly due to the NFLCP's rapid gain in overall membership. As of December, total subscriptions numbered 971. Rates for subscribers not NFLCP members were increased and a new "library" subscription rate was added.

Advance planning and production of the journal were more tightly organized in 1980. The variety of contributors increased, and CTR was used as NFLCP's principal promotional tool for local programming information. NFLCP has encouraged sales at regional conferences, has selected articles for reprint sales, and has set advertising rates in efforts to defray costs in 1981.



Financial Development

Principal effort of the year has been NFLCP's push to secure funds to hire an Executive Director full time. In January 1980, NFLCP's Board of Directors took the first step by adopting a plan which focused on maximizing revenue-producing features of CTR and some Community Education projects. Finance Committee coordinator Margie Nicholson began working this year on new advertising and marketing plans for these projects.

In 1980, the NFLCP received approval from National Endowment for the Arts for an \$8,000 grant for its 1981 access conference. In October 1980, the Board also set in motion a drive for corporate sponsorship of three NFLCP projects for 1981 — a local programmers training program, a programmers' handbook, and a conference for access coordinators and program directors.

Publicity

The publicity effort mounted by NFLCP over the S.B. 2827 issue resulted in the establishment of a task force last July to deal with the ongoing

publicity needs of NFLCP. Coordinator Michael Witsch contacted the national press in early September to follow up on the new push for better representation of access issues in the news. Focus of the task force is to feed news to CTR, organize a regional publicity committee, help access centers publicize better, and serve NFLCP's overall publicity needs.

Regional Membership Development

The increase in 1980 regional meetings and in the number of national conferences hosted or co-sponsored by NFLCP preceded a dramatic increase in overall membership. Below are comparisons of 1979 and 1980 membership statistics:

	1979	1980
Total Number of Members	446	818
Annual Rate of Growth	52%	83%
Annual Rate of Membership Renewal	34%	34%

Distribution of membership across the northeast quarter of the continental U.S. is still NFLCP's largest membership base. The following percentages reflect the total amount of NFLCP members residing in each region as of December 1980:

- 19% Central States Region
- 18% Midwest Region
- 17% Northeast Region
- 14% Mid-Atlantic Region
- 9% Southwest Region
- 9% Far West Region
- 8% Southeast Region
- 4% Mountain Region
- 2% Northwest Region
- under 1% International membership

During 1980 the number of organizational memberships in NFLCP grew from 39 to 90 organizations. Among these are cable systems, school districts, non-profit video access centers, city and county governments, universities, libraries, and religious institutions.

NFLCP Internal Administration

The Elected Board of Directors

The principal thrust of NFLCP's Board of Directors in 1980 was the establishment of a national office for the organization, and to secure funding for an executive director and some support staff. A secondary task was to establish permanent ties to national organizations whose own goals and objectives might coincide with those of the NFLCP. In March, 1980 a National Membership Office was established by the Board and its volunteer Executive Director Sue Buske. The projects listed elsewhere in this report are the result of contacts established in early 1980 between NFLCP and the National Endowment for the Arts, National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, Public Service Satellite Consortium, National Federation of Community Broadcasters, Appalachian Community Service Network, National Endowment for the Humanities, the U.S. Fire Administration, and Congress Watch.

The 1980 NFLCP Board of Directors is comprised of members elected at large, by task forces, and by regions of the NFLCP:

Don R. Smith (Chairperson)
Diana Peck (Vice-Chairperson)
Stacey Ferris (Secretary)
Susan Bednarczyk (Treasurer)

Jay April
James Bond
Tom Borrup
Anne Davis
Carol Brown Eilber
Adam Haas
Phyllis Joffe
Bill Makely
Anne Mundy
Margie Nicholson
Brian Owens
Carolyn Perkins
Anna Marie Piersimoni
George Stoney
Randy Van Dalsen
Greg Vawter
Michael Witsch



(L-R) Paige Amidon, Sue Bednarczyk and Randy Van Dalsen take a first look at ACCESS '80 tape at HBO Studio in New York. Photo by Michael J. Witsch.

The NFLCP Board met four times during 1980, and its Executive Committee met twice in the latter part of 1980. As part of its outreach effort, members of the Executive Committee travelled to almost every region of the NFLCP to serve as resource people at regional events.

The NFLCP Board awarded its 1980 George C. Stoney Award to Sue Buske for her continuing work in the area of public access and local programming development.

The National Office

In March 1980, NFLCP hired Administrative Assistant Robin Whelan on a part-time basis to manage the general National Office duties of processing membership and publication requests and renewals. NFLCP has received office space and allocations of a CETA worker's time from the Miami Valley Cable TV Consortium,

without whose support this membership office would not have been able to effectively function. Daily correspondence, management of some printing of NFLCP publications, and distribution of CTR to the membership is handled by this Kettering, Ohio office at 3700 Far Hills Ave., Kettering, Oh 45429.

As of spring 1980, NFLCP has obtained computer time to file names, addresses, organizational affiliations, phone numbers and renewal information of all NFLCP members. Under the management of David Bloch, this service has increased the accuracy of NFLCP mailings, made general record-keeping more accessible, and efficiently provided printed mailing labels to regions and project directors operating on tight time schedules.

Efforts are currently under way to establish a permanent national office in Washington, D.C. in addition to the membership office in Ohio, under the direction of Executive Director Sue Buske.